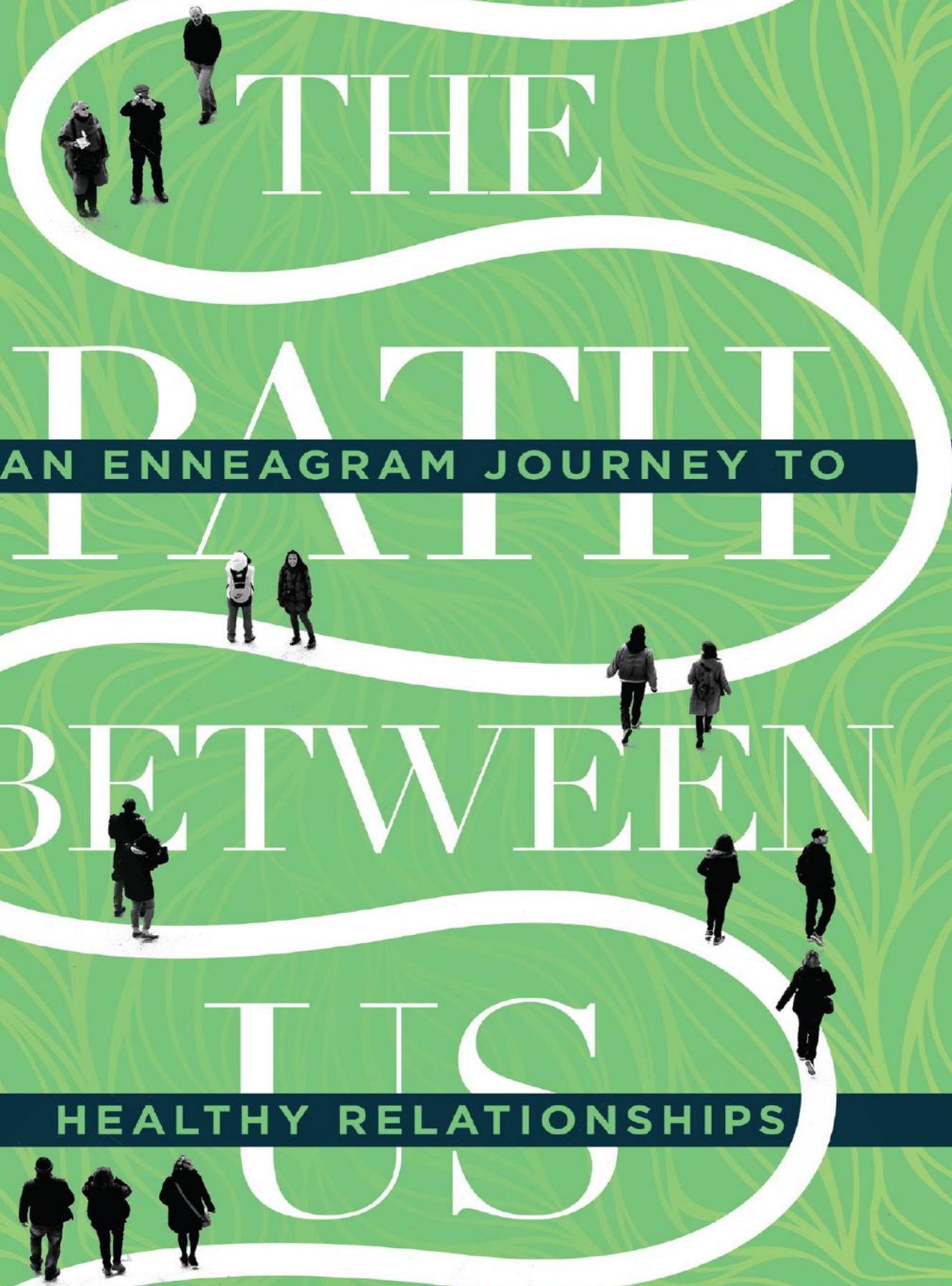


SUZANNE STABILE



THE

DANCE

AN ENNEAGRAM JOURNEY TO

BETWEEN


US

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

THE PATH BETWEEN US

AN ENNEAGRAM JOURNEY TO
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

SUZANNE STABLE


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For Giuseppe

The path between us defines the goodness of the life we share.

I love you with all of my heart.

For our children and those they love

Joey and Billy, Jenny and Cory, Joel and Whitney, B.J. and Devon

For our grandchildren

Will, Noah, Sam, Elle, Joley, Piper, Jase

For Richard Rohr OFM

Who taught me the Enneagram

For Sheryl Fullerton

Who taught me how to write about it

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Introduction

THE ENNEAGRAM IS A JOURNEY



*J*oseph Stabile is the best person I know—he’s good all the way through. We’ve shared life now for more than thirty years. Even so, there are still times when his actions leave me wondering if I will ever fully understand his way of being in the world.

A few years ago on a flight from New York to Dallas, we were seated in the middle of the main cabin watching strangers as they looked for a place to put their luggage in the already full overhead bins. The last couple to board included a gentle-looking older man carrying his suitcase in front of his body, peeking around it frequently to check for empty seats. His wife followed close behind, looking a bit frightened by all that was going on: there weren’t two seats together, their suitcase would not fit under the seat, and there was no other space for it in the cabin. The flight attendant tried to get their attention, but neither one responded. It was clear they didn’t speak English, so the flight attendant managed the situation the way many of us would—by simply talking louder.

Since Joe is bilingual I thought he could help, so I nudged him and pointed out the obvious communication problem. In fact, I was heavily invested in the prospect of his engagement—all to no avail. He insisted that the flight attendant could figure it out. And he was right. She took the gentleman’s suitcase to the front, someone graciously gave up a seat so the couple could sit together, and my husband was content as we prepared for take-off.

Everyone was okay . . . everyone except *me*.

I communicate well, verbally *and* nonverbally. So even though nothing more was said right then, Joe knew that all was not well in his world because all was not well in mine. And since he's never one to work out things in public—and I'm not one who usually lets things go—we both knew it was only a matter of time.

We got home, settled in, went to bed, and greeted the next day with full schedules. But that next night at dinner I said, “You know that I think you are the best human being on the planet, and that's still true. But I want you to explain to me why you wouldn't help that couple on the airplane when they obviously needed a translator.”

And then my husband, who is such a Nine, responded: “Honestly, it never occurs to me that I should help. I see that they are struggling, but I just don't think about getting involved.”

I found myself, again, aware of the significant difference in the ways Joe and I see the world. I replied as a Two, “I *always* know who needs help, and I usually know what they need. I'm just not always equipped to offer assistance.”

This story (and a thousand more like it) is the reason I wrote this book. All relationships—those that truly matter and even those that don't—require translation. And if our interest in relational growth and transformation is sincere, then the Enneagram is one of the most helpful translation tools available.

THE BEAUTY OF THE ENNEAGRAM

I am what is often called a “people person.” Quite frankly, I find other people fascinating and I like them. Almost all of them. I like to talk to them and shake hands or hug or pat them on the back. At the same time, every person I know is a mystery to me—not so much in how they appear, though that in itself is miraculous. The thing I find captivating is that we all *behave* so differently.

However, in my experience there are two things we have in common: we all want to belong, and we all want our lives to have meaning. But finding belonging and meaning are dependent on our ability to build and

maintain relationships—with people who are like us, and often with those who are not.

Some things about the way we do life change over time, but other things stay the same, and there's seemingly not much we can do about it. We are often confronted with the reality that other people and how they view the world may never make any sense. Keeping in mind that none of us can change how we see, we are left with the option of trying to adjust *what we do* with how we see.

The Enneagram teaches us that there are nine different ways of experiencing the world and nine different ways of answering these basic questions about life: *Who am I? Why am I here?* and *Why do I do the things I do?* How we build and maintain relationships varies significantly from one number to another. Looking through the lens of the Enneagram makes it possible to better understand ourselves and others, increase our acceptance and compassion, and navigate the paths between us.

This book will help in understanding how each of the nine Enneagram numbers sees the world, how they make sense of what they see, how they decide what to do, and how all of that affects how they relate to others. Of course, because this is a book about relationships, it won't be tidy—human interaction can be unpredictable and messy. Sometimes we get it right and other times we're dead wrong. The good news is that with the help of the Enneagram, we can all do better.

THE NUMBERS

The chapters that follow are written *about* each number and include helpful tips *for* that number as they look at their own relationships. Because these chapters detail the ways a specific number interacts with other numbers, general knowledge about the Enneagram will be helpful. This section offers a brief refresher on the basics. If you haven't read *The Road Back to You*, please do—it's a great introduction to the Enneagram and the perfect companion for this book.

1s are called *Perfectionists*, but they don't like that title. They struggle with anger but they turn it in on themselves so it becomes resentment. Ones

have a hard time believing that they are good enough or worthy because of a constant inner voice that finds fault with everything they do, so they settle for being right or correct. Ones have a judging/comparing mind. They notice error that others don't see and they often feel a personal responsibility to correct it. They believe every step of a task should be done correctly, so they give their best, do their best, offer their best, and they expect the same from others.

2s are called *Helpers* or *Givers*. They need to be needed. Twos give a lot, sometimes for altruistic reasons and sometimes in order to receive in return, although it is usually a subconscious motivation. When Twos enter a room their attention automatically turns to others and asks, "How are you doing?" "What do you need?" "How can I be helpful?" Their motivation is to build relationships by sensing and meeting the needs of others.

3s are called *Performers*. They need to be and be seen as successful, efficient, and effective. Threes have trouble reading feelings—their own feelings as well as the feelings of others. Threes often hide their anger, fear, sadness, disappointment, and embarrassment until they are alone to deal with them. They like to set short-term and long-term goals and they usually achieve them. They motivate the rest of us to do things we might never have imagined. And when we win, they win.

4s are the most complex number on the Enneagram. They are called *Romantics*, and their need is to be both unique and authentic at the same time. Fours believe something is missing in their lives and they won't be okay until they find it. They are comfortable with melancholy and often get energy from what is tragic. They are the only number on the Enneagram that can bear witness to pain without having to fix it. Because they value authenticity and abhor disingenuousness, Fours naturally elicit more depth in their encounters with others.

5s are called *Observers* or *Investigators*. Fives want adequate resources so they never have to depend on someone else. They are the most emotionally detached of all the numbers. This kind of detachment means that they can have a feeling and let it go. They manage fear by gathering information and knowledge. Fives have a limited, measured amount of energy for every day so they are careful about what they offer to others and

when. It is extremely brave of them to show up for relationships because it costs them more than any other number.

6s are called *Loyalists*. They need to feel secure and certain, yet they have a lot of anxiety about possible future events, a world full of threats, and the hidden agendas of others. Sixes manage that anxiety with worst-case scenario planning, order and rules, plans, and the law. They don't want or need to be the star—they simply do their part and hope everyone else will too. With their loyalty and steadfastness, Sixes are the glue that holds together all of the organizations we treasure and belong to. They are more concerned about the common good than any other number.

7s are called *Epicures* or *Enthusiasts*. They take delight in the best possibilities. They need to avoid pain, and they quickly reframe any negative into a positive. Sevens fool themselves into believing they have a full range of emotions, when in fact they live most of life on the happy side—life is to be experienced and enjoyed. This means repetition is not desirable and routine is a turnoff. Sevens are also masters of denial, managing fear by diffusing it. Yet they have a special way of uplifting people around them. Truthfully, we would have a lot less fun in our lives without them.

8s are called the *Boss* or *Challenger*. They are independent thinkers who tend to see everything in extremes: good or bad, right or wrong, friend or foe. Anger is their emotion of choice, but it doesn't last long. While Eights don't invite forthrightness, they want and respect it. Their focus is outside of themselves and they are always for the underdog. Eights are passionate! They have more energy than any number, giving everything they have to what they are doing or what they believe in, and engaging most with people who are willing to go all out.

9s are called *Peacemakers* or *Mediators*. They are the least complex number on the Enneagram. They have the least energy of all the types because they try to keep in anything that would cause conflict and keep out anything that would steal their peace. Nines are the most stubborn number. They manage their anger by being passive-aggressive. They have the gift and the problem of seeing two sides to everything, so they are prone to procrastination and indecision. In relationships, Nines are loyal and like to

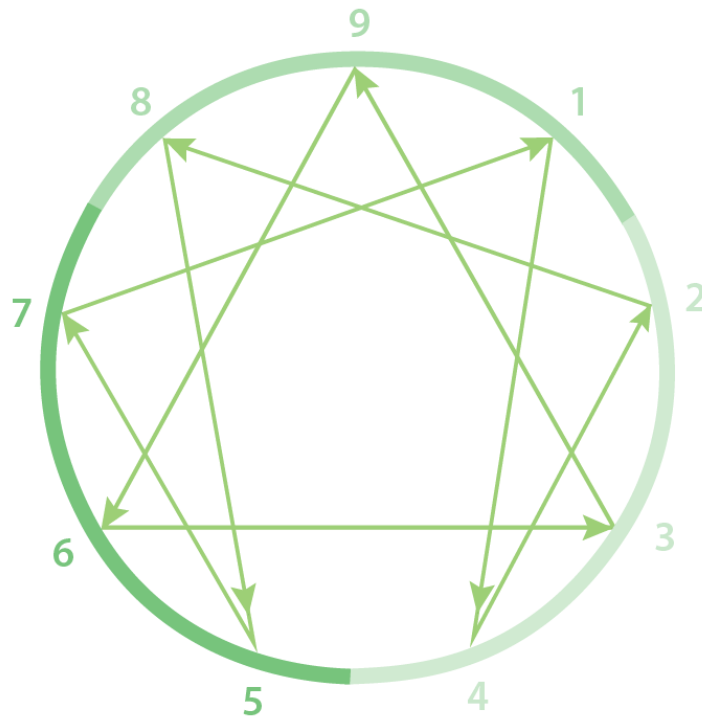
be close. They are self-forgetting, setting aside their own needs and agendas to merge with others.

**The Enneagram
offers a unique
perspective for
accepting what is.**

THE ENNEAGRAM SYSTEM

The Enneagram is unique in what it offers as we make our way from who we are to who we hope to be. As you begin this journey, here's an overview of the dynamics of the Enneagram.

TRIADS. Within the system of the Enneagram there are three ways of meeting the world: feeling, thinking, or doing. The nine numbers are divided among those three ways, known as triads, and your triad is determined by how you encounter information or situations. Twos, Threes, and Fours are part of the Heart Triad, where feelings dominate. The Head Triad includes Fives, Sixes, and Sevens and is dominated by thinking. Doing is dominant for the Gut Triad, which includes Eights, Nines, and Ones.



WINGS, STRESS, AND SECURITY. Each number on the Enneagram has a dynamic relationship with four other numbers: the two numbers on either side as well as the two at the other ends of the arrows in the diagram above. These four other numbers can be seen as resources that give you access to different patterns of behavior. While your core motivation and number never change, your behavior can be influenced by and can even make you look like another of these numbers. Mature students of the Enneagram can learn to move around the circle, using these four auxiliary ways of behaving as needed.

The four dynamic numbers are the following:

Wing numbers. These are the numbers on either side of your number, and they have the capacity to significantly impact behavior. For example, a Four with a Three wing is more outgoing than a Four with a Five wing, who is more introverted and withdrawing. Wings, in general, affect behavior when dominant, but have no effect on core motivation. Understanding the degree to which you lean into

one wing or the other is important in understanding your own personality.

Stress number. This is the number your personality draws on when you are stressed, indicated by the arrow pointing away from your number on the diagram above. For example, in stress Sevens draw from One behavior. They can become less easygoing and adopt more black-and-white thinking. Your stress number is not necessarily a negative move—you need the behavior of the number you go to in stress to take care of yourself.

Security number. Just as you draw from one number when stressed, you also draw on the behavior of another number when you're feeling secure. This is indicated by the arrow pointing toward your number on the diagram above. For example, Sevens draw from Five behavior when they're feeling secure, letting go of their need for excess and embracing a less-is-more mentality. All numbers need the behavior available in security to experience holistic healing.

STANCES. In everyday language, *stance* describes how we stand or carry ourselves. It's much the same in the Enneagram: stance indicates a posture or attitude that is a habitual, patterned way of responding to experiences. It's the default mode for how a number behaves. In each chapter I will offer you a bit of insight as to how the stance of the number relates to how he or she navigates relationships.

The Aggressive Stance (Threes, Sevens, Eights). These people are happy to be in charge of others, and they put their agendas first. They are seen as standing independently and, at times, as moving against others. Their orientation to time is the future.

The Dependent Stance (Ones, Twos, Sixes). These people are very concerned with others' expectations so they are loyal and dependable. They are seen as moving toward others, and their orientation to time is the present.

The Withdrawing Stance (Fours, Fives, Nines). These people are slow to act because they are often shy or introverted. They are seen

as moving away from others, and their orientation to time is the past.

A WORD OF ADVICE

I know you will be tempted to go straight to the chapter about your number and read that first, followed by the numbers of the people you are closest to. I might do the same thing. But I would encourage you to read the *whole* book. You will find information about your number as you relate to the other numbers included in every chapter. Your next step will be to read and use *The Path Between Us Study Guide*, perhaps with another person or in a group.

Your understanding of *who you are* affects every relationship you enter into and try to maintain.

It is my hope that this book will help you make all of your relationships better, not just a chosen few. But I would be remiss if I didn't mention some things we should all watch out for when applying the wisdom of the Enneagram to our relationships.

It's important to remember that the Enneagram is not a static system: we are all moving from healthy, through average, to unhealthy, and back again. In my experience, most of us spend our time somewhere in the high-average range. We often respond to life from a healthy place, and during challenging times we probably react in unhealthy ways. So this book primarily depicts how we respond to others when we're in the average to healthy range.

We also need to keep in mind that there are many variations of each number. Those variations result from whether you are introverted or extroverted; whether you are, at that moment, in a healthy, average, or unhealthy space; whether you are social, one-to-one focused, or self-preserving; whether your orientation to time is the present, the past, or the future; and how familiar you are with the Enneagram as well as other tools for personal and spiritual growth.

Finally, since we are talking about relationships, there are a few key interpersonal principles to keep in mind as you read. First, please don't use your Enneagram number as an excuse for your behavior. Second, don't use what you've learned about the other numbers to make fun of, criticize, stereotype, or in any way disrespect them. Ever. Third, it would be great if you would spend your energy observing and working on yourself as opposed to observing and working on others. And going forward, I hope you will share my desire that we all grow in our ability to accept, love, and walk beside one another on the path with loads of compassion and respect.

IT'S WORTH THE WORK

Recently Joe and I were on another flight and were seated in the second exit row. In the row in front of and across from us, the flight attendant was asking a passenger if he spoke English. He said, "No," so she asked again. And again he shook his head and said, "No." Since she continued, in English, to explain to the passenger that he could not sit in the exit row unless he spoke English, he continued to engage with her, attempting to understand what she was saying.

In an effort to be respectful of what Joe taught me about Nines the last time we traveled together, I remained silent.

Then, just as I buckled my seat belt, Joe unbuckled his. Noticing the struggle, he stepped over me into the aisle and, in Spanish, explained to the gentleman that he would need to trade seats with the woman in front of him because of an airline requirement that everyone in the exit row speak English.

The man got up to move. Smiling, he thanked Joe for helping him. When my thoughtful, bilingual husband returned to his seat, the woman

behind us reached over the top of her seat, patted him on the shoulder, and thanked him for being so kind and so very helpful.

When we are able to see ourselves as we are, and as we can be, it's a beautiful thing.