

# Psychology of Achievement: The shark in the fish tank

By Ali Afshari

In past issues, I wrote extensively about finding your spiritual path. It's so essential to find your own path in life because corporations don't seem to be interested in your soul. I could go on, and on talking about spirituality but I feel I am not providing you with proper armor to survive in this crazy world. As Omar Khayam puts it: "Be happy for this moment. This moment is your life", so don't miss living it by looking for its meaning too much. Let's first build a solid foundation of who we are, and where we are at in life. I have watched so many inventors undersell themselves because they think they aren't prepared to cope with the complexities of the business world. As Steve Jobs put it; "Every big business you see out there, started at one time, by someone not much smarter than yourself". The first thing you need to know is to get to know the self, it starts with understanding your optics! There are gravitational lenses, and there are mind lenses.

Our personality is a lens made of thought, through which we view the world. Once we learn this lens we look though is simply thought, we could get to know ourselves, and learn to view the world with new eyes. Let's start from the very beginning. The story of creation is mentioned in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in a similar metaphorical way: Upon creation of human being, God asked all angles to bow to him. All angels did except Satan. He said: "You made him out of clay (matter) but made me from fire." So he didn't bow, and that's how he was cast out.



This is the same as the first part, isn't it?



It doesn't really work, .... Couldn't we try ...



This works better, what do you think?



Gracias senior!

Courtesy, Warner Brothers

In the movie Amadeus, this is so vividly illustrated. Salieri, kept pleading to God to make him the best composer of his time but God chose, an inferior being to be his subject. The film is not so historically accurate, but I want to illustrate a point. There is a scene that he looks at Mozart's work, and says: "God was speaking through this man. But why had he chosen such unworthy creature over me?" To make this more complex, there is a passage in Rumi, that says before making his grand creation, God took Satan aside, and asked him not to bow! So just like in "Charlie, and the Chocolate Factory", Mr. Wilkinson actually works for Willi Wonka: "How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world" by W.S. But why? It would only make sense if we viewed this world like an elementary school.



Mr. Wonka ..



So shines a good deed in a weary world ..

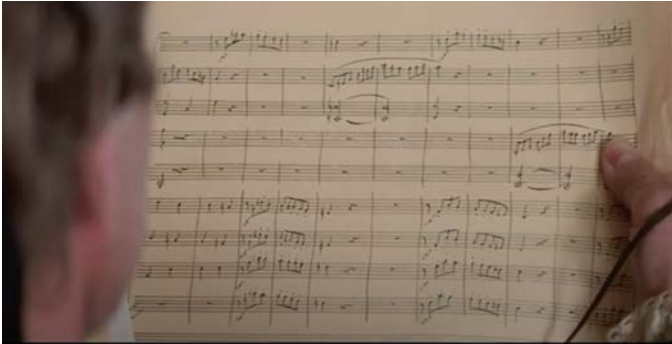
Courtesy, Paramount Pictures



These are originals?



It was astounding, beyond belief ...



It didn't show any correction whatsoever. It was as if he was taking dictation!



I was staring through the cage of those meticulous ink-strokes at an absolute beauty.

Courtesy, Warner Brothers

It's just like breeding Koi fish in artificial tanks (cover page). You see, Japanese eat a lot of fish, and they grow them in safe heavens to produce a lot of them. What they realized in the beginning was the fish wasn't tasting as good as those caught from the wild. One solution they found was to throw a shark in the tank. The shark would eat a number of fish, of course, but the rest would taste so much better because they'd be moving around! If you look at life in this way, it would be much easier to understand hardship, pain, and suffering. Without it, we won't grow. I think we owe it all to our ancestors Adam, and Eve. They were bored in heaven, so they asked themselves what's there to do around here to get us out?! Ever since we arrived on earth, look how much we grew. Other souls haven't grown as much as we have.

There is a need to have a mixture of personality types to help us grow. I have often quoted from Rumi, as he covers these personality types in his book: "Masnavi". In the west, they are developed as a concept known as Enneagram. Understanding Enneagram starts from understanding the basic personality types you have known in your past, and present, and expanding it to everyone else you are going to meet in life. It would take a few years to master it. Once you learn it, it's a philosophy that could guide or misguide you. I would highly recommend a teacher, or a lot of reading before you start changing your mind about life. I highly recommend visiting [enneagraminstitute.com](http://enneagraminstitute.com), and listen to each personality type explained by Don Riso. Let's first get a glimpse of what it is.

According to enneagram, there are 9 personality types:

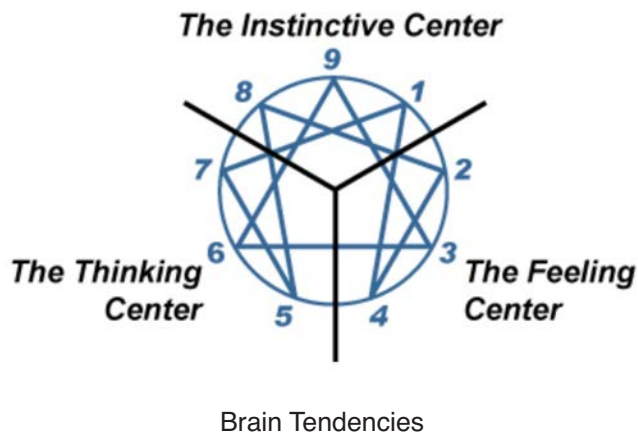
- 1) The Reformer (Mahatma Gandhi)  
Principled, purposeful, self-controlled, and perfectionistic.
- 2) The Helper (Mother Theresa, Amelie!)  
Generous, demonstrative, people-pleasing, and possessive.
- 3) the Achiever (Tony Robins, Salieri)  
Adaptable, excelling, driven, and image-conscious.
- 4) The Individualist (Michael Jackson, Steve Jobs, Mozart)  
Expressive, dramatic, self-absorbed, and temperamental.
- 5) The Investigator (Albert Einstein, the Maverick)  
Perceptive, innovative, secretive, and isolated.
- 6) The Loyalist (Malcolm X before his visit to Hajj)  
Engaging, responsible, anxious, and suspicious.
- 7) The Enthusiast (Robbin Williams)  
Spontaneous, versatile, acquisitive, and scattered.
- 8) The Challenger (Paublo Picasso, Martin Luther King)  
Self-confident, decisive, willful, and confrontational.
- 9) The Peacemaker (Mister Rogers)  
Receptive, reassuring, complacent, and resigned.



The Enneagram Chart

You can start to first get to know who you are, and then look around to recognize which personality types you are surrounded with. Once you learn and get to know these personality types, it would drastically change your perspective of past, and present, and everything else you have learned in your business, and love relationships.

To get you started, I'll start with unhealthy types. The healthy types are the best companions you could find, and they will help you grow, and succeed. For unhealthy type, let's begin with **type 3** because I am sure you have come across them since early childhood. I'll be less sympathetic as the general description for type 3's because you'd most likely be their victim than gaining from them. They have three main characters: Achiever, opportunist, liar. If you are in a relationship, and he or she is too perfect, it's most likely a type 3 you are dealing with. This is because could play all the 9 types (mirror you), depending which type you are. They have great appeal, and charm, and have huge level of self confidence. You'd never win an argument with them, so don't bother trying. Type 3's use the love, and support of type 2's, and gain the knowledge of type 5's to go up in the ladder. They are usually so jealous, and that's what drives them to succeed. They'd usually get to their healthy side if they get rich, and famous. On the healthy side, they are the smartest, and most useful friends who could show you how to get ahead in life. Enneagram website describes the unhealthy type 8 as what I just described as type 3, but I don't think type 8's have the smarts. I always think of type 8's, vs 3's as George Foreman versus Mohammed Ali. If you want to see type 8's marriage with type 2 (the worst relationship), watch Ferlini's "La Stradea". There is also a type 7 in that movie. The best way to learn Enneagram is by identifying each type, and remembering their characters.



The **1st type** are the Reformers. They are the rational, idealistic type, and usually work long hours. They usually don't lie, and have strong convictions on what they believe. They get so angry when criticized. If you are in a relationship with type 1, they'd show their love by criticizing you. This stems from their perfectionist minds. They take work so seriously. Germans, and Japanese are type 1 at the national level. I remember co exhibiting with Micos GmbH, and while setting up the booth with their sales engineer Charly Maucher who didn't know me well at the time. I soon learned he didn't like to joke around while working! If you joke around, they'd interpret it as you are not working.

Then there is **type 2**: They are the helper, caring type. If your mom was type two, consider yourself lucky to have received all the unconditional love from them. If you have type 2 spouse, they're constantly looking for ways to please you, making you feel special. There is a scene in "City Lights" that illustrates type 2 in a big way. Type 2's are the most vulnerable members of society. Later in life, they suffer from regrets because they feel they were taken advantage of. Healthy type 2's would have moved towards 8 (learn to say no), and 4 (to improve self esteem through learning the arts, and earning money with it).



Courtesy, Chaplin

**Type 4's** are the artists, and actors who want to be seen, and noticed. You could always spot them by the way they are dressed. They'd keep switching their interests. They'd buy roller blades, and after learning it, they'd put them aside, and never use them. They have mood swings from very happy to tears. **Type 5** is the "Investigator type", who sits silent at gatherings without being noticed. They are well read, or extremely knowledgeable about a subject, making them experts in their field. **Type 6** is the secretive, suspicious type, with many fears. It would take time to gain their trust. When people have psychotic issues, type 6's are the most vulnerable type because they would refuse to take their medication, not trusting their doctor: They'd end up bums in the streets! **Type 7's** are the relaxed type who have had great childhood, and they are usually flexible about their beliefs. They believe in having fun in life, but get board easily. They'd switch careers unless their job is challenging or fun, like dentistry, etc. **Type 8's** are the rigid, and angry type. Don't get in an argument with type 8 because if they feel they are not in control, they might hit you! **Type 9's** get along with everyone, and have tendency to easily trusting others. They need to be pushed to do anything, and are in general, extremely laid back.

So how could people grow out of their type? Malcolm X is a good example, since his view of racism changed drastically after his visit to Hajj. One day, a meek asked a prophet why God has forgotten about us. God doesn't seem to see us. The prophet said: "No, in God's eyes, everyone is poor. The rich are even poorer." The wisdom tales in Rumi guide the spiritual seeker towards growth rather than comfort." Here's a story from Rumi's book, "Masnavi" that touches on this:

There were two brothers: One, a servant residing at king's place, and the other living in the mountains. The one who lived in the mountains came to see his brother. He gave him a tour of his comfortable lifestyle, and offered him a place to stay: "Why not come and live with me to enjoy all this comfort? You're hurting your back every day by carrying logs from the mountains while in here, you could live so comfortably by just serving the king". His brother replied: Why not come and join me yourself? Yes, your back might be hurt by carrying the log but you'll learn to live like a free man!

The increasing gap we have between have, and have not's, the wealthy getting wealthier, and poor getting poorer has a lot to do with the structural injustice. Once you get to know who you are, you are better prepared to not only excel in your life but you'd also have a better chance in making this world a more even playing field. For the first few months, you'll be judging everyone around you, and say to yourself: "He's a type 3, or she's type 2, oh he's definitely type 8, etc." But let me not deceive you. If you try sharing this knowledge with others, you'll find people are not willing to change, and you'll suffer watching them live below their full potential. You'll soon learn about how you think, and how your own thought patterns are, but changing yourself takes mastery. It would take years to reach mastery.

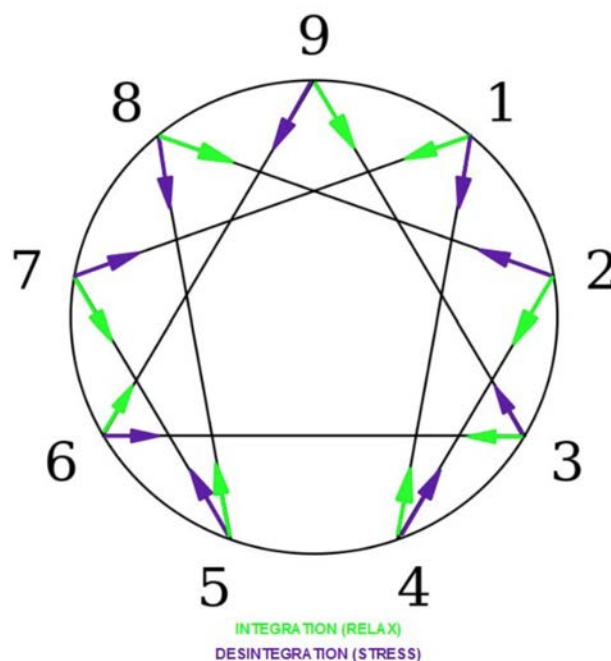
### Wings

Although people fall under distinct personality types, they also have wings, or tendencies towards their neighboring type, such as type 1 with type 2 wing, or having a wing 9. A type 3 with wing 2 is like Bill Gates spending his wealth on charity, and giving funds towards medical research. You could have also gained certain habits from your parents, but you have your own specific type, and you are not them.

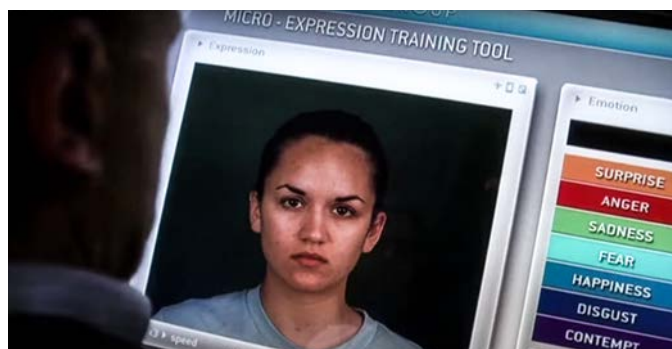
### Direction

Referring to the diagram on the right, direction of improvement for each personality type is revealed: For example, for type 1, moving towards 7 means stop being so rigid on their beliefs, and to work less hours. Moving towards 4 for type 1 means to learn to express their feelings through learning the arts, and music or to spend more time in nature. One character of type 1's is they remember too much to the smallest detail, and this causes them to have worn out minds. They also have a strong inner guilt voice that constantly whispers on their ears. Type 1's are always in great need of taking a break from work, and letting go of their obsessions.

Back to type 3's, one way to recognize them is you'd often find them being at the center of attention at parties, and always praising themselves. They'd always turn out to be an expert in anything one brings up. If you say you like astronomy, they'd say oh, Carl Sagan and I we buddies! They also use their spouse to support them: Carl and I used to talk for long hours. He told me everything about his work. He often said to me: "You are more expert than I am"; Isn't that true honey? Their spouse would say: "That's right". That's a type 3! Another way to identify type 3's while they are deceitful is to read their micro facial expressions. Watch "Lie to me" series to learn more about facial expressions!



Wings, and Directions



“Lie To Me” series is based on Dr. Paul Ekman’s (left) research on micro facial expressions. Don’t let it misguide you. It’s just a movie. In real life, we shouldn’t judge people like that, and we shouldn’t be suspicious of everyone we meet!

Life is a great teacher so have as much fun you can in learning, but don’t be in a hurry judging others. There is enormous information on the web, but try to find a real person as your life coach. I will further explain the servo mechanism, and advanced Enneagram on the next issue. Enneagram is part of a much broader psychological treatment method called NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming), which is the most powerful technique to master your mind.

Many good products fail because people behind them lack commitment. Japanese contributed enormously to opto-mechanics by following Zen philosophy in their design, and marketing but many firms with Japanese leadership changed their course towards type 3, and I hope they will find their way back. In his memoir, Mr. Maitani (designer of Olympus OM system) praised his boss’s vision during his fruitful career at Olympus. Somehow that vision was lost, and the sustenance of one of the most successful Opto-mechanical design firms in Japan now came to an end.

Becoming an inventor, and an entrepreneur takes a lot of hard work to succeed, and it hasn’t changed since Thomas Edison. Inexperienced inventors consider the patent process as if there are people standing in line behind their door waiting to get it in their hands, and marketing it. In most cases, you’ll need to go all the way to making it succeed. As for people who made it big in America, don’t think they had it easy. Bill Gates slept in his office at one time, and that’s what Steve Jobs did, and so did Warren Buffet.

Speaking of whether real growth is through hardship or in comfort, we all like comfort. You show me one person who doesn’t like comfort, and I’ll tell you they aren’t real. During his fame, the world champion Mohammed Ali had a comfortable life style in his mansion in Chicago. He often complained to his wife: “I used to get up so early every morning to go to the gym to stay in shape but look how I would hardly get up early because I don’t have to”. People would go through all sorts of hardship for a big dream they might have in life but if they have money, they’ll just buy their way through. Well I also hope by now, I have made my point. If anyone thinks their self worth is because of their wealth, they assumed wrong. This is what type 3 needs to learn that life is not a race.

Unfortunately, our national tendency in US has been towards type 3 in the most part. You could also say that about China. My wife, and I took a tour in China, and they couldn’t resist wanting to sell their products throughout the tour. I don’t know what it is about entrepreneurship that gives the wrong direction to personality types. I remember while I was young, I did most of my science because it existed, and not because it would make me more well off. I remember what I was told when I began working at Teledyne Controls: “If you want a raise, you’ll have to be more visible!” Going to trade shows, and selling, as well as looking for the nicest girl in the world to be my wife transformed me the wrong way. As I look back, I say to myself well, you got all that, what now? It’s not all that simple but that’s really the truth about most of us. Well, why not separate our business life from our personal life, and stop being type 3 all the time? That’s why raising children and taking care of elderly parents become so important. This is well explained by Servo Mechanism.

Servo mechanism determines what one needs to learn based on their actions. This is a more accurate definition of Karma. Most people think Karma is if you do something wrong to others, the same thing would happen to you later in life. But servo mechanism states that life simply takes proper actions to teach the wrong doer to correct their path. For example, if one has gained unhealthy habits of any of the 9 types, the servo mechanism would invent situations along their path to correct them, or teach them a lesson.

I am a believer in the guidance of source almighty to succeed in life. Most physicists I have spoken with, believe this world is running on its own. So many sci fi movies suggest it was created by UFO’s. In spite of the widely publicized comments by Stephen Hawking to suggest he was an atheist, when he was asked about if pure physics could be running world, he said through his speaking aid: “I don’t think physics would tell you to be nice to your neighbor”. Without guidance, this world would be in ruins. To those who believe in the hereafter, life is an ongoing continuum. As a 1st grader might think, the session would resolve by the year’s end, but there are also those who believe there will be a next term, and a next. Considering what we already know, and what remains to be unknown about the universe, our short life span to learn it all is simply a joke. We are getting prepared for something far more colossal.