

Nature of Spiritual Work

Excerpt from the Epilogue to
The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram
Sandra Maitri©

Pat and I read this book together and got a lot out of it. We both felt the truth and wisdom of Maitri's closing words about the nature of spiritual work. While Maitri applies these words to the enneagram, Pat and I realized that her words apply to all effective spiritual paths, including Pat's AIP program and my Pathwork. Substitute the name of *your spiritual path* for the word *enneagram* in the following, and I think you will see Maitri's wisdom.

... the enneagram is only a map. The enneagram and the information about the human soul and its evolution that it reveals are not ends in and of themselves. No matter how fascinating it may seem to pick apart and decipher more understanding from the enneagram, unless this information is secondary to our direct experience and fulfills the function of enhancing our personal unfoldment, it will do us little ultimate good. On its own, the information contained within the enneagram and within this book is not a panacea – it will not solve our problems, resolve our issues, or connect us with our depths. It is only information, whose function is to orient and guide us in our inner work, and unless that knowledge is put to use, we do not benefit from it. If it only remains intellectual, it may stimulate our minds and provide interesting diversion and entertainment, but this should not be mistaken for the actual work of transformation.

That endeavor is neither rapid nor is it easy. The directions that I have pointed toward regarding the inner work that each of the types needs for real personal transformation are easily summarized in a few pages. On the other hand, the actual working through of the personality such that our souls are progressively less occluded and so that they become increasingly transparent takes many years, no matter how dedicated we are and how much we apply ourselves. It is also work not easily done alone. Since true transformation requires overcoming the inertial pull of identification with the personality, support in the form of a spiritual school or a Work group is usually necessary. Because becoming conscious means seeing what we are blind to, the guidance of a teacher is often required for our Journey to be successful.

This Journey requires facing painful and sometimes deeply frightening aspects of ourselves, tucked away in the recesses of our souls. Things definitely feel as if they get worse before they get better, as we get closer and closer to some of the deep strata of the personality, with abysses and primitive energies that sometimes feel as though they will sweep us away. It is not an easy journey and it requires a degree of honesty with ourselves only possible if we are personally driven to know who we really are and if getting in touch with the truth – no matter how uncomfortable – brings joy to our hearts.

For those who choose to undertake it, it is infinitely rewarding. A whole universe awaits within us, complete with its infinite vastness and its paradoxes, its strangeness and its

exquisiteness. While we will sometimes encounter black holes and vast empty places, all the beauty of the cosmos is there to unfurl itself. As we take this Journey, we increasingly understand what being human is all about: becoming transparent windows of the Divine, traveling through all of the limitless beauty of the creation, and living lives informed by Being, lives filled with profundity, contentment, and meaningful expression and contribution. It is my sincere hope that this book has shed light on the terrain and that it will continue to support your Journey Home.