

## **Letter to the Editor / Response to John Stone About Type-Related Enlightenment Experiences**

**By Katy Taylor**

Reprinted with permission from *The Enneagram Monthly*, November 2008, Issue 153.

I was so happy to read the interview with John Stone and to hear that he is facilitating such intensives for us to have moments outside of our normal ego experiences! What makes me most excited, though, is that both Robert Tallon and John Stone describe their “enlightenment” experiences exactly as Riso and Hudson teach for a Type Nine and Type Five, respectively.

In the Riso-Hudson Levels of Development, the Nine in us feels most sensitive to Essential Unity/Oneness/Completeness, but when this contact is lost, right at Level 2, in order to try to get it back, the ego turns toward being peaceful and harmonious in order to recreate contact with that Essential part of my True Nature. In turning toward being peaceful, I turn my back on anything unpeaceful, like feeling my own instinctual energy, my own strong feelings, my own powerful, engaged, aliveness energy. This becomes a shadow issue for the Nine and reclaiming that part of myself is exactly the key to moving up the Levels and returning to the real Unity/Oneness/Completeness that I ultimately seek.

It is amazing to me that Robert describes exactly this several times in the interview. “...I experienced myself as aliveness, awareness, and a kind of instinctual intelligence that knew itself as this.” “I was so struck by the joy of just being here, now, alive. Being aware of being alive. Being aware of being aware...I often sensed myself as an animal—a contented, inquisitive animal—as if my survival instincts were on overload. And there was such joy in the immediacy of that...I also had a great sense of capacity and capability, of strength...and of being ready and eager to respond, to act.” These moments of enlightenment are about owning that alive, powerful, engaged side of the Nine that the ego doesn’t know how to get back to. Only after owning and integrating this part, can the Nine in us actually move to the higher Levels and have deeper contact with the Essential Unity/Oneness/Completeness that is our birthright.

John Stone also described his enlightenment experiences in a way that sounds like L2 issues of integration for a Five, for whom, as Robert noted, the ego tendency is to detach. This is because when the Five in us feels cut off from Essential Illumination/Clarity/Understanding, at Level 2, I turn toward my mind to figure out how to get back to this place that feels like “home,” and I turn away

from contact with the world, with others, with anything that will disturb my ability to think and figure this out. This becomes a shadow issue for the Five that informs the whole ego personality structure—I have to learn to be in real contact with myself, with the world, and with others to have contact with true Illumination/Clarity/Understanding.

Consider these quotes: “My heart opened and I fell in love with God...How can I not love that from which I derive?” “Facilitating an intensive requires me to step out of my normal way of relating to others so I can be open and available to the participants. Because of that demand I’ve discovered I have a capacity to contact others on a deep level that I had forgotten was there.” It sounds like John is reclaiming this part of himself that is about not only relying on the mind, but finding contact with his heart and with others. Integrating this key shadow material is what will allow the Five to rise up the Levels and be in contact with that Essential Illumination/Clarity/Understanding that is the ground of Being.

This is why I love the Enneagram—it so beautifully illumines each type’s journey home. We can see how our ego striving is a misguided attempt to get back to what is truly possible, and how moments of enlightenment can help us to remember who we really are. As John says: “Discovering who you *really* are changes everything. Knowing that you are not your personality—by having a direct experience of something more real—is incredibly freeing. And contacting the essence of what you are can be truly life-altering.” May our practice continue to open us up to this deepest, sacred potential of our Being.