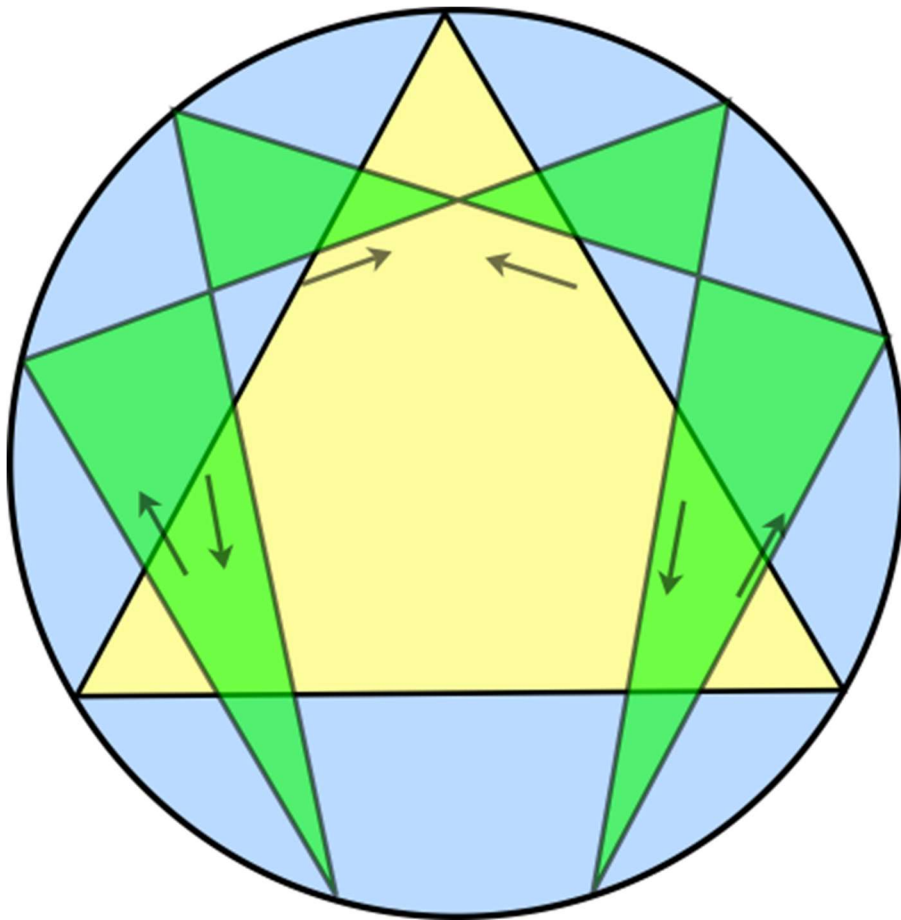


A SEVENFOLD WORK MANUAL

Anthony Hodgson



Based on a lecture given in 2006 at CIIS, San Francisco on
The Sevenfold Work by J.G.Bennett

©2006-2022 Anthony Hodgson

Contents

A SEVENFOLD WORK MANUAL.....	0
The Work of Self-liberation.....	3
Work on Oneself.....	5
Structuring Work On Ourselves.....	6
The Foundational Triad	7
The Seven Lines of Work	9
[1] Assimilation	10
[2] Practice	12
[4] Service	14
[5] Receptivity.....	16
[6] Submission.....	18
[7] Grace	20
Manifestation and Conscious Evolution	22
[4] Manifestation	23
Threefold Manifestation	24
The Inner Lines.....	26
1-4 Application [assimilation → service].....	27
4-2 Persistence [service → struggle]	27
2-8 Offering [struggle → grace].....	27
8-5 Opening [grace → receptivity]	27
5-7 Conversion [receptivity → submission]	27
7-1 Questioning [submission → assimilation].....	27
Attunement exercises.....	28
A Week of Inner Work.....	30
Appendix – ‘Life is reall only then when I am’	31

Liberation leads to liberation. These are the first words of truth – not truth in quotation marks but truth in the real meaning of the word; truth which is not merely theoretical, not simply a word, but truth that can be realized in practice. The meaning behind these words may be explained as follows:

By liberation is meant the liberation which is the aim of all schools, all religions, at all times.

This liberation can indeed be very great. All men desire and strive after it. But it cannot be attained without the first liberation, a lesser liberation. The great liberation is liberation from influences outside us. The lesser liberation is liberation from influences within us.

G.I.Gurdjieff
Early Talks

The Work of Self-liberation

The human is a microcosm of the macrocosm. To participate in conscious evolution we must first recognise that although we attribute consciousness to ourselves this is an illusion, a self-deception. This is our greatest obstacle. How can we take a practical interest in raising consciousness if we think we already have it.

Liberation must be seen against the background that there are four states that our psyche can be in. There is the state of sleep, the state of waking sleep, self-remembering and objective consciousness. Our principal error is to believe that our everyday state of waking sleep is consciousness. But in this normal state of being awake we are actually at the mercy of multiple influences in our psychic makeup that hold us prisoners of our internal states and unable to act from our real self with deeper integrity of conscience. As Gurdjieff put it, using the traditional analogy of the human as a hackney carriage, the owner is absent and the carriage is hired by any chance passer by. In this normal state "man cannot do".

Another way of seeing this, a favourite picture of Ouspensky, is that a person has many 'I's. These eyes are not integrated but are like a diverse crowd jostling for who is in charge. We constantly say "I" to what we say, what we do and what we feel and think. But here is a great deception. We believe we are the same "I" on all occasions but because of the

fragmentation, we actually behave as a crowd of disparate people. This can be studied for example by observation of promises. One "I" makes the promise. A different "I" appears when the promise is called, knows nothing about it and denies it was ever made. For that fragment of awareness this is the truth – there is no inner connection. This is why man cannot do.

So we are multiple personalities dwelling in an environment of multiple influences, imagining we have continuity of being and consistency. If this wasn't enough, we live in a psychological environment, inwardly and outwardly, which is dominated by psychic toxins. The old fashioned word for these are sins. But we can see from Gurdjieff's account of the nature of the consequences of the organ kundabuffer, that if there is an original sin, it is not ours: it is the consequence of a cosmic mistake. Nevertheless we live with and in the consequences which are the perpetuation of the toxic psychic environment.

It is worth hearing Gurdjieff on this.

"Inner influences and inner slavery come from many varied sources and many independent factors – independent in that sometimes it is one thing and sometimes another, for we have many enemies.

There are so many of these enemies that life would not be long enough to struggle with each of them and free ourselves from each one separately. So we must find a method, a line of work, which will enable us simultaneously to destroy the greatest possible number of enemies within us from which these influences come.

I said that we have many independent enemies, but the chief and most active are vanity and self-love."

G.I Gurdjieff

Another way of investigating this is to say that we are dominated by negative emotions. You have only to look at the media to see that what dominates our interest is bad things happening, or indulgent distractions. indignation, anger, accusation, vilification, shock and so on are the staple of both news and so called art.

Yet the work psychology states that in a normal three brained being, negative emotions are completely unnecessary! Just imagine a state of well being where energy and attention are not eaten up by all these negative factors, worries and anxieties.

So now we can say a little more in answer to the question “what is work on oneself?”

Work on Oneself

The basis of work on oneself is the gradual destruction of our illusions about ourselves and the world we live in and the gradual replacement of these by realities. This proceeds by degrees through stages of self-observation, self-remembering leading to liberation from the toxic psychic environment in which we live. For this work we do not need to withdraw from life, for we will only take ourselves with us if we do that and may be in a worse situation to come to see ourselves as we really are. The work begins from exactly where you are in your current “ordinary life”; it begins here and now.

The step from waking sleep, our ordinary state, to self-observation needs for us to wake up. We cannot do this at once; there are many small flickering awakenings, moments when we catch a snapshot of ourselves and note something contrary to our general expectations.

For example, I behave as if I am an intelligent person. If I do something stupid then I tune this out with pride and vanity. Or I have a moment of waking up and see, initially to my embarrassment that I have done something stupid. Now there is something really important about this process.

My friends see clearly that in some respects I am stupid. They may even point this out. That will evoke in me denial and self-justification. Rather than become enlightened in that matter I will dig my hole deeper. That is why, in this school, the work is SELF-observation. Only my own seeing is valid. There is not second hand work here.

However, there is another principle. Gurdjieff, in his phase of work in France between the world wars, had a number of aphorisms in the “study house”. One of them is

“Remember you come here having already understood the necessity of struggling with yourself, only with yourself; therefore thank anyone who gives you opportunity.”

This also makes it clear that although the fundamental responsibility for the work of transformation lies with each one of us, without the impact of others, whatever their condition, we will not be reminded that indeed it is our work on ourselves.

Which leads us to the next stage, which is self-remembering. How is this different from and deeper than self-observation. Who is the self that is both remembering and being remembered? It is not the toxic self of self-delusion. It is not the machinations of mind, emotions and body. It is the deeper being that carries the germ of truth. It is the doorway to Objective Conscience. It is the self that can say "I am" in integrity, able to hold to the accumulated observations of the false self and continuously choose the real from the unreal. It is the self who is truly asking "who am I?"

This is especially the work of the fourth striving, to pay as rapidly as possible for the sorrow of our Common Father Endlessness Creator. The sorrow is we have fallen short of our potential, we have succumbed to and become trapped in the toxic ordinary world believing it to be normal.

Structuring Work On Ourselves.

Once we have built up enough weight of self-observation to realise that we are in this hole then we can take an interest in finding a ladder. Here the value of connection, even indirectly, with a school becomes critical. No amount of second-hand reading can substitute for an encounter with conscious being. In traditional schools this takes the form of the Guru, the Master, the Teacher. It is also the teaching of how we can carry out this work.

As you are well aware, I am not of the generation that encountered Mr. Gurdjieff directly. So I am not even second hand, but third hand. But my teacher, John Bennett, in the year before he died, came to certain insights about what Gurdjieff had hinted about what we call "lines of work". The task is so complex and so difficult that without a structure of self-work that addresses all the aspects of our being, we cannot stay on track.

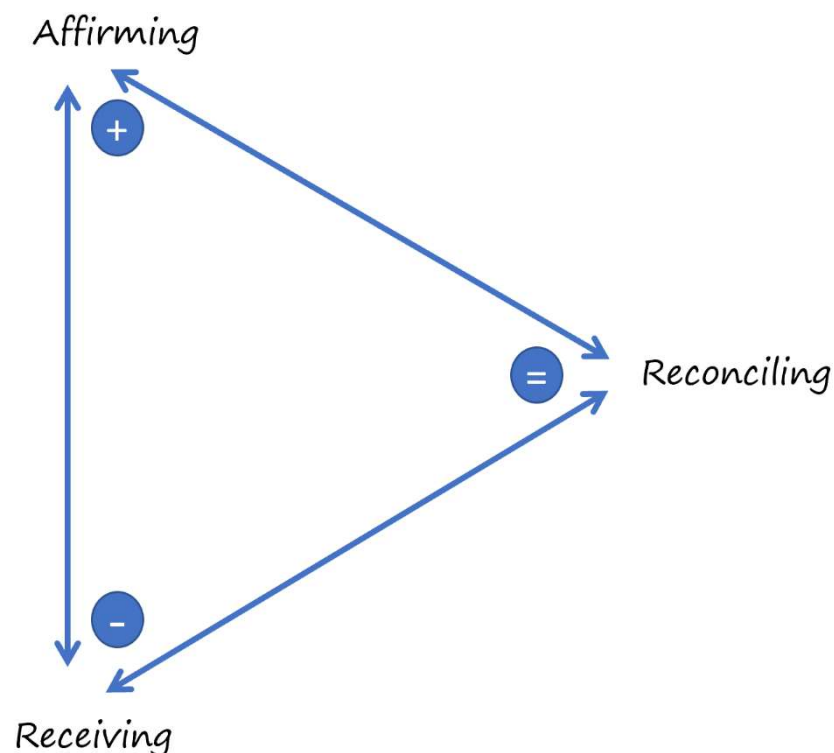
What I want to share with you is my own understanding of what Bennett called "the sevenfold work". I will take you through it in the context of the enneagram, which will help you hold the structure in mind.

The Foundational Triad

“Working through efforts and working through receiving cannot substitute for each other, but they may both be present in one whole action. Help is needed to begin something new and help is needed to bring this to completion, but without efforts there is no action. The combination of the two sides in us belongs to the reality of synergia or cooperation that is necessary for the wholeness of the Work”

J.G.Bennett.

The starting point is that our human nature is constructed on the Cosmic Law of Three. We are transmitters of an affirming force, which is channelled through the head or thinking centre. In Chinese Taoism this is called Shen. We also are earthed literally through the lower part of the organism. This is known in Chinese Taoism as CHING. It is associated with the Tan Tien or Hara. We are also channels for the reconciling force through the heart centre known in Taoism as QI and in a more complex way in Sufism as ruh and qalb. The important point to note here is that in an unevolved state these forces operate at a coarse level and are unintegrated. The human, particularly, is unable to transmit the third force, which is the source of intelligent action and compassion.



Now the idea of integral work on oneself is that all three cosmic aspects need their own kind of work. This there is affirmative work, receptive work and the work of manifestation. These each have a very different character. Further, John Bennett came to see that each of these in turn had three aspects which made up the nine of the enneagram. So let us build up the nature of this integral work in stages. But firstly the **principle of balance**.

We have a tendency to want to solve our problems with a single action, preferably a very simple one – the proverbial 'silver bullet'. However, even when a single practice helps, by the fact of its simplicity it's effectiveness will tail off and 'flat line'. It may even turn into its own opposite and become another limitation or problem.

The reason is that our human system has many aspects and many levels and is in a much wider context than we take into account. This means that we need different methods for different dimensions of our being. But even if we were to have such a diversity of method ¹ we still have a mind that limits the complexity we can handle.

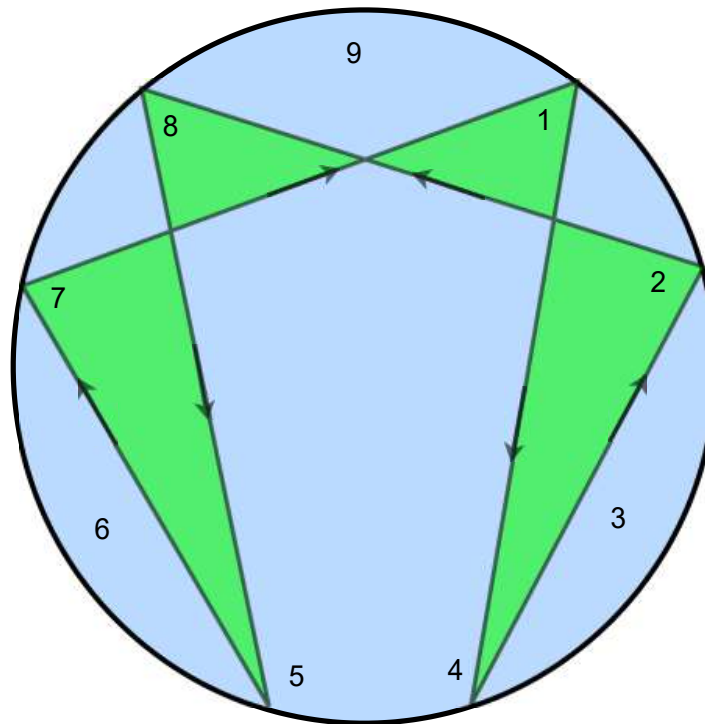
It turns out that just seven aspects gives us a large step away for the 'single solution' and covers different aspects of our being in the context of a cosmic spirituality. These areas are a bit like having a balanced spiritual diet with several advantages

- They match the human system in relation to transformation and conscious evolution
- Practiced or attended to in combination they are more likely to guide a balanced development.
- They have a systems relationship such that they can shed light on each other and thereby renew and refresh each other
- Given some proportion of time and energy devoted to them they can be carried out in the midst of everyday life

Symbols and be powerful aids to navigating the range of practices. The seven lines of work presented here uses the enneagram for this purpose.

¹ There are many types of yoga and Buddhist practice

The Seven Lines of Work



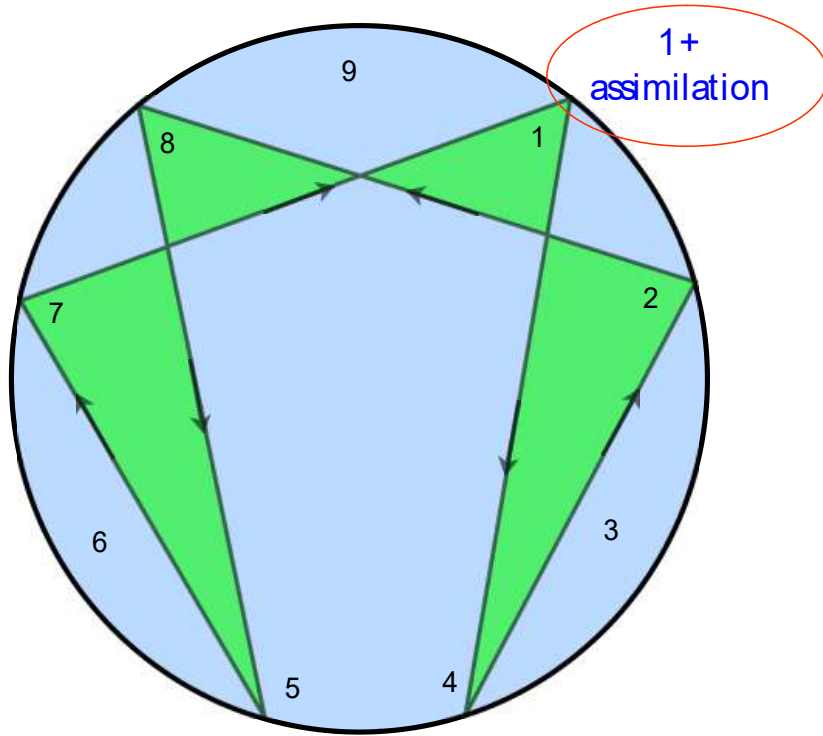
THE SEVEN LINES OF WORK

If we work on ourselves in only one way then results will be limited and can lead to imbalance.

When we separate out the lines of work in order to see what each is like, we must remember that the quality and character of each line comes from the Whole Work.

Each line challenges our understanding of the others and enables them to be renewed.

[1] Assimilation



ASSIMILATION (+)

- Finding effectual knowledge
- Searching, questioning, attending, experimenting
- Internalising the external
- Initiative and efforts
- Pursuing a single question in great depth
- Giving our full attention

EXAMPLES

Finding effectual knowledge

We need to gather necessary knowledge and discriminate between primary, secondary and misleading sources.

Searching, questioning, attending, experimenting,

We need to go out and look for nourishment, experience possibilities and try things out to develop our discrimination.

Internalising the external

Ideas we have encountered in the abstract need to be reflected on and worked with so as to become directly available to us.

Initiative and efforts

We need to plan and carry out initiatives to develop our appreciation in the round.

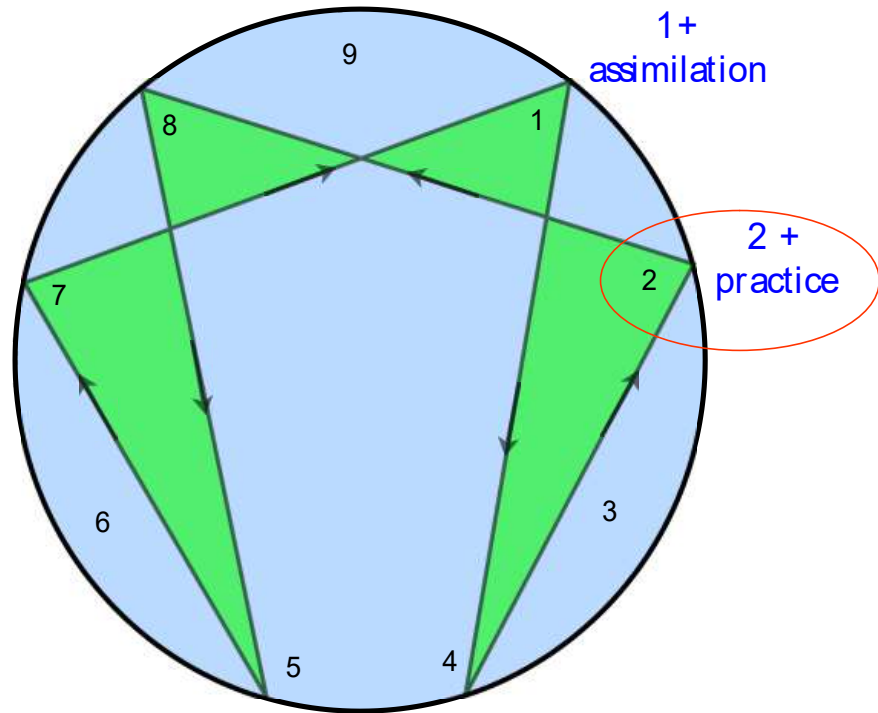
Pursuing a single question in great depth

We need to find and then keep coming back to our central question.

Giving our full attention

We need to study important things thoroughly.

[2] Practice



PRACTICE (+)

- Struggling with our weaknesses
- Inner separation of 'yes' and 'no'
- Doing what "it does not like"
- Developing a strong mind
- Bearing the unpleasant manifestations of others
- The act of renunciation

EXAMPLES

Struggling with our weaknesses

There are habits that accumulate in our life which are unhelpful, even destructive, in carrying out the work. These absorb energy and attention that we need elsewhere. Struggle is necessary to weaken and even eliminate them, so that we have capacity for positive development.

Inner separation of 'yes' and 'no'

If we are identified with the 'me' with the unhelpful habit, we need to evoke the observing self and separate I, the witness, from the 'me'. As we repeatedly intensify the observation of the habit, it eventually weakens.

Doing what "it does not like"

Some actions and practices are beneficial but unpleasant to the conditioned self. Often this obstacle is imaginary but never-the-less constraining to our progress. If we can affirm carrying out the task, facing up to the resistance, we evoke the third reconciling force which nourishes our transformation.

Developing a strong mind

There is the challenge of sustaining our inner work. It helps to develop some actions to as near perfection as possible through repeated practice. It must be carried out in good heart, not reluctance, since mind here includes the heart.

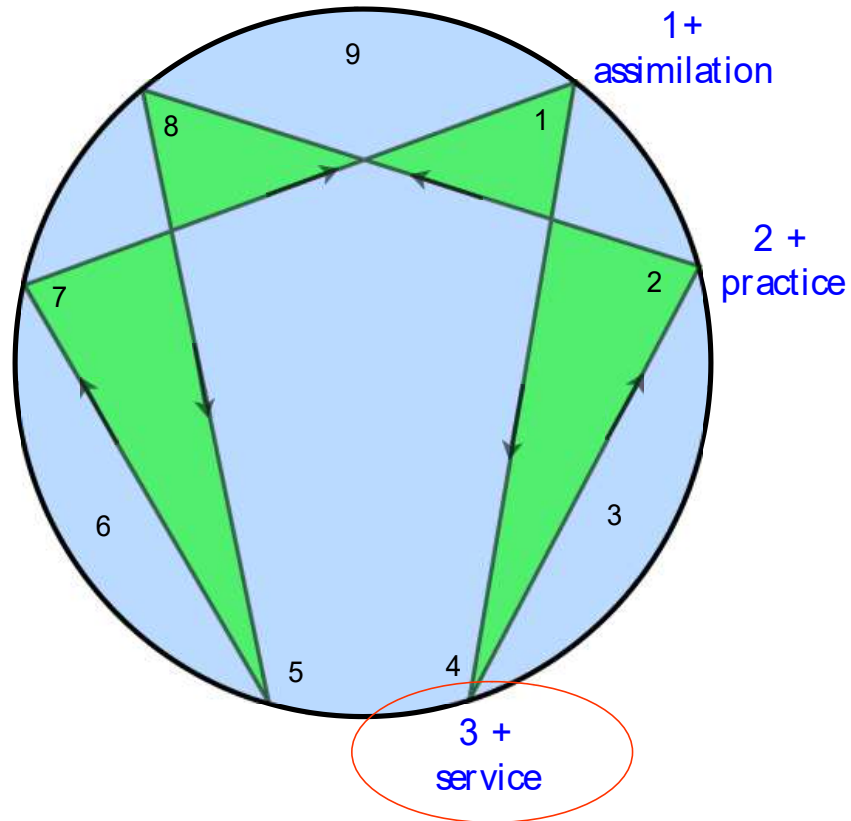
Bearing the unpleasant manifestations of others

Our personal work is impossible without the impact of others. Although we need positive support and encouragement, there is a special value in being in unpleasant company if we practice not reacting. Often the unpleasantness we experience triggers some aspect of ourselves that we are unwilling to face.

The act of renunciation

This is strong act giving up something to make room for taking up something else of a higher priority and value.

[4] Service



SERVICE (+)

- Responsibility for something outside of ourselves
- Present sacrifice for the needs of the future
- Help freely given without concern for reward
- Care for environment, objects, plants, animals
- Working for the good of our neighbour
- Intentional suffering - 'taking on a burden'

EXAMPLES

Responsibility for something outside of ourselves

Looking after something outside of ourselves that is not entirely under our control challenges the ego and helps cultivate conscious realism.

Present sacrifice for the needs of the future

Taking care of the future entails carrying out things now, the value of which is to be realized in the future – possibly not even within our own lifetime.

Help freely given without concern for reward

So often we take on doing for others in order to be appreciated and receive thanks, This form service is not free from the ego which expects thanks and reward. The reward must come solely from the integrity of the action.

Care for environment, objects, plants, animals

One reason we are here on this planet is to learn stewardship. We cannot properly take care of the whole unless we practice taking care of the everyday things that are present in our life including that which we do not own. For balance this should include living creatures as well as objects.

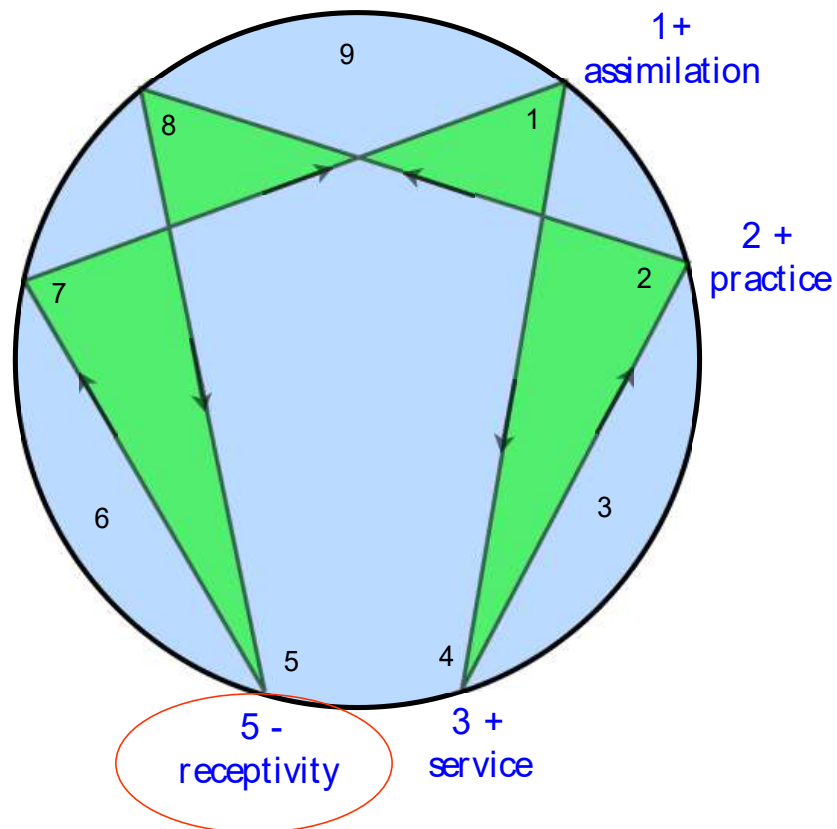
Working for the good of our neighbour

This is the principle of ‘one hand wash the other’. If we look out for our neighbours they will look out for us. Admittedly this is difficult in a paranoid and aggressive society but we need to be islands of hope in human community.

Intentional suffering – ‘taking on a burden’

If we take on service of this kind we need to realize that there are burdens, that service is a ‘thankless task’ for the good of life and humanity irrespective of whether we are recognized as such. Our being is partly measured by what we can bear.

[5] Receptivity



RECEPTIVITY (-)

- Being able to receive help
- Allowing oneself to be taught
- Transmission heart to heart with higher energy
- Allowing into ourselves situations that teach
- Opening up through ritual action
- Gratitude in the presence of the teacher

EXAMPLES

Being able to receive help

We too easily assume that we are in charge of ourselves so in situations where we need spiritual guidance we are too identified with “fixing the problem”. Often the real help we need is to let go of our interpretation of our problem and open up to help which initially might seem contrary or impossible or unconnected.

Allowing oneself to be taught

By its very nature the ego tends to resist external input which challenges its inherent pride and vanity - “I know best”. In some ways being clever and even eager to learn can get in the way of open listening because we always try to fit new learning into our existing belief system not realising that it is a change in that underlying pattern that is the crucial point.

Transmission heart to heart with higher energy

We are culturally conditioned to the narrow view that knowledge is transmissible through words and symbols. Deeper transformation occurs through a wordless energy where shared silence is the medium.

Allowing into ourselves situations that teach

Another critical domain of learning is the full experience of being in a situation and living through it. This can often be some form of crisis or set back which challenges in a new way where we have to learn our way through it experientially.

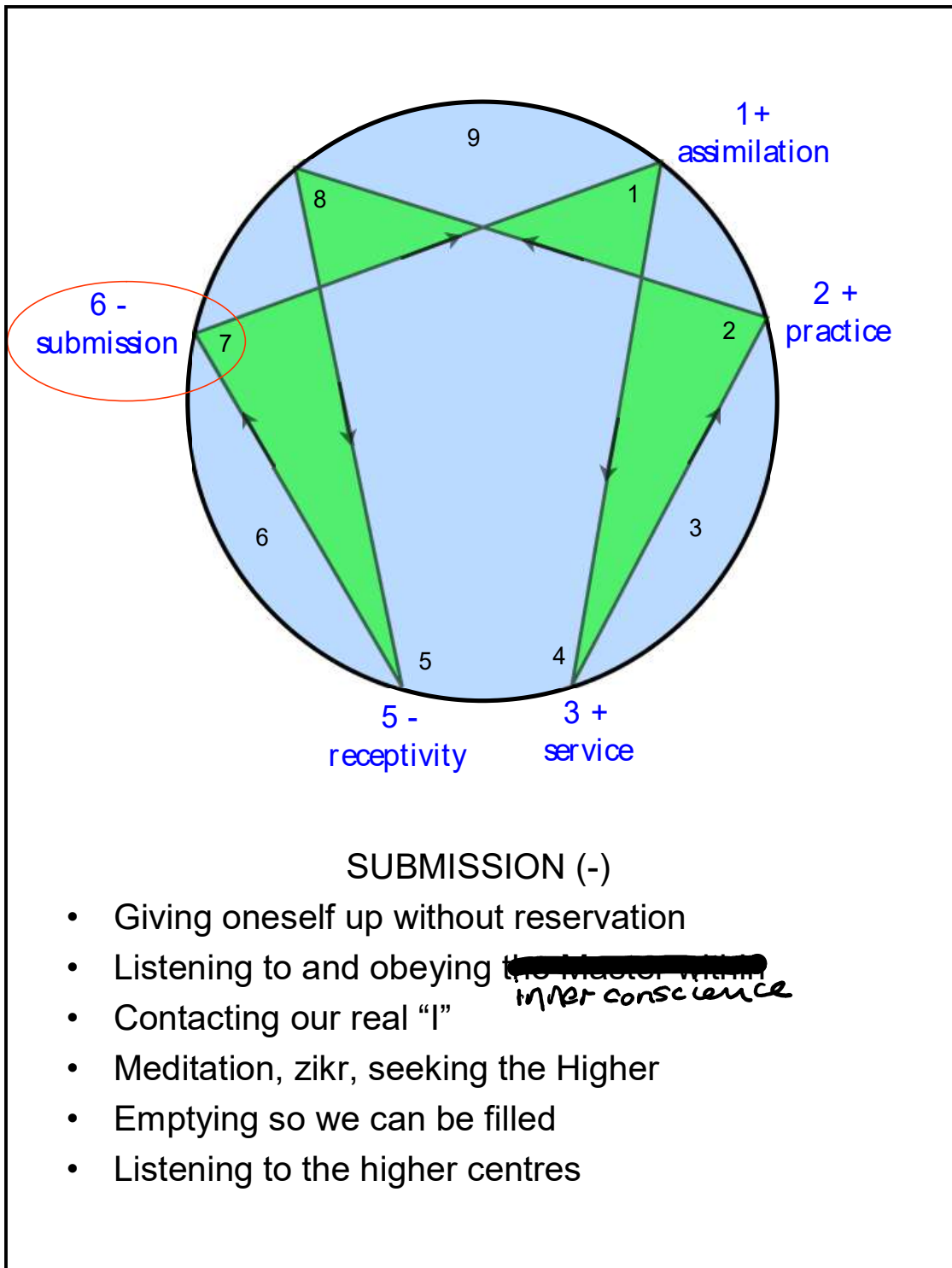
Opening through ritual action

There are patterns of behaviour, individual or shared, which have been designed to evoke changes of state and even the entry of new information and energy. Religious ritual and ceremony are institutional forms of this.

Gratitude in the presence of a teacher

An authentic teacher does not need gratitude. However, an attitude of gratitude and appreciation from the student increases the openness of the transmission.

[6] Submission



EXAMPLES

Giving oneself up without reservation

Some steps of development requires that we are not holding on to the old and familiar. This is deeper than just mental but is a act in the heart requiring trust.

Listening to and obeying the inner conscience

Conscience is perhaps the one higher function that is not blocked by social distortions, but this is because it is buried. Inner quiet and sincerity are necessary for its guidance to come through.

Contacting our real "I"

This inner contact is really being contacted by our real "I" since this is true identity taking hold of our existence and bringing with it the capacity to act with full integrity.

Meditation, zikr, seeking the higher

Various techniques in different traditions are designed to help cultivate the openness to the higher influences. To be effective they need to be practiced as an invitation to the intensity of the higher, not simply as ways of calming the mind and "being happy".

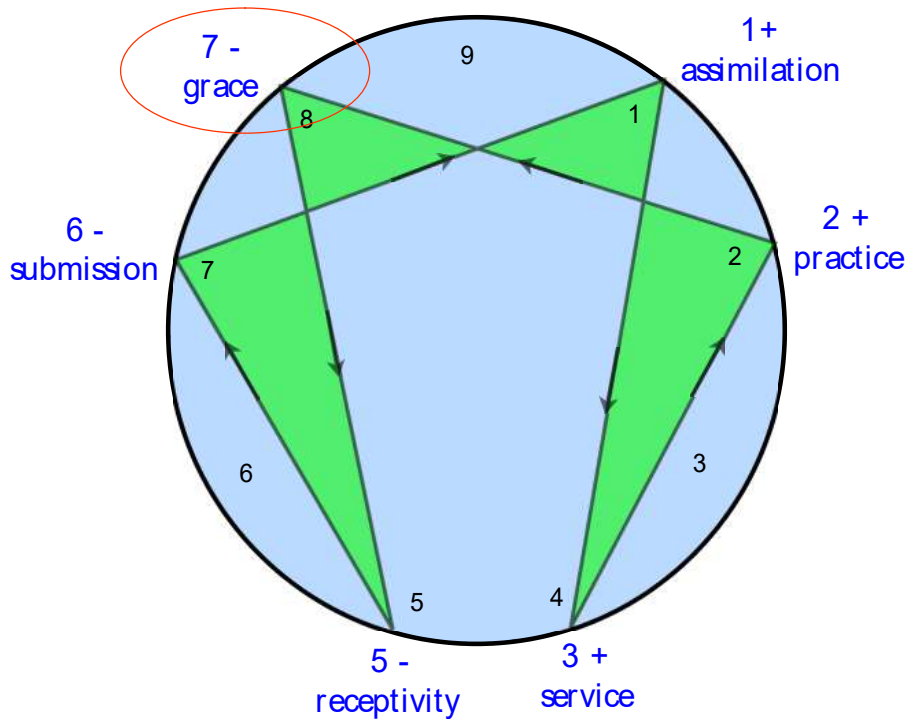
Emptying so we can be filled

Teaching cannot reach us if our mind is already full. We need to approach teachings having put aside as far as possible our knowledge and beliefs so there is space for the new and the different.

Listening to the higher centres

Beyond our usual thinking and feeling there is a higher emotional and a higher thinking centre which are participating in cosmic consciousness. They are our true inner teacher who is 'broadcasting' all the time. However, the chaos and pathology of our 'normal' state blocks out the transmission rather like static in receiving a radio signal. We need to practice receptive 'tuning'.

[7] Grace



GRACE (-)

- Receiving help we do not know how to ask for
- Purity of being, heart and motive
- Unplanned and unintended awakening
- A non-causal action outside of time and space
- Unasked for help often in the form of difficulties
- I AM THAT

EXAMPLES

A non-causal action outside time and space

The action of grace, spirit, synchronicity are not explainable within a limited framework of time and space. Action comes through the sixth dimension (hyparxis) and activates potential that otherwise would remain latent. Creative and redemptive action comes from the hyparchic future as a gift to the existing universe.

Receiving help we do not know how to ask for

Since we have little awareness of latent potential and no awareness of the creative future, help from that dimension may be given in spite of ourselves and could not be asked for because it is not in our experience before the action.

Purity of being, heart and motive

A state of purity in our heart-mind is more likely to be able to receive transformative action. This is because a confused state of mixed motives and hidden agendas either cannot receive or cannot sustain the gift.

Unplanned and unintended awakening

We experience the action from higher dimensions as spontaneity. We cannot plan on being truly spontaneous and no amount of intention can create a cause/effect relationship to the spontaneous. However, sustaining an open mind and open heart can often increase the possibility of such help.

Unasked for help often in the form of difficulties

If we need to go through a deep transition of reframing of our experience and understanding - it will be a shock to the system. A smooth transition is a rarity. Out of the many difficulties life presents there may be a particular difficulty that has the power of learning and transformation gifted to it.

I AM THAT

The ultimate gift is the spontaneous realization that *I am the Self* beyond mind, ego, belief and delusion – recognition of non-duality, Advaita.

Manifestation and Conscious Evolution

“There is in our nature as three-brained beings the capacity to be both affirmative and receptive. We can make efforts and we can receive help. When the two are in balance, something is set free in us that is a genuine creation, a new reality. This belongs to the Work.”

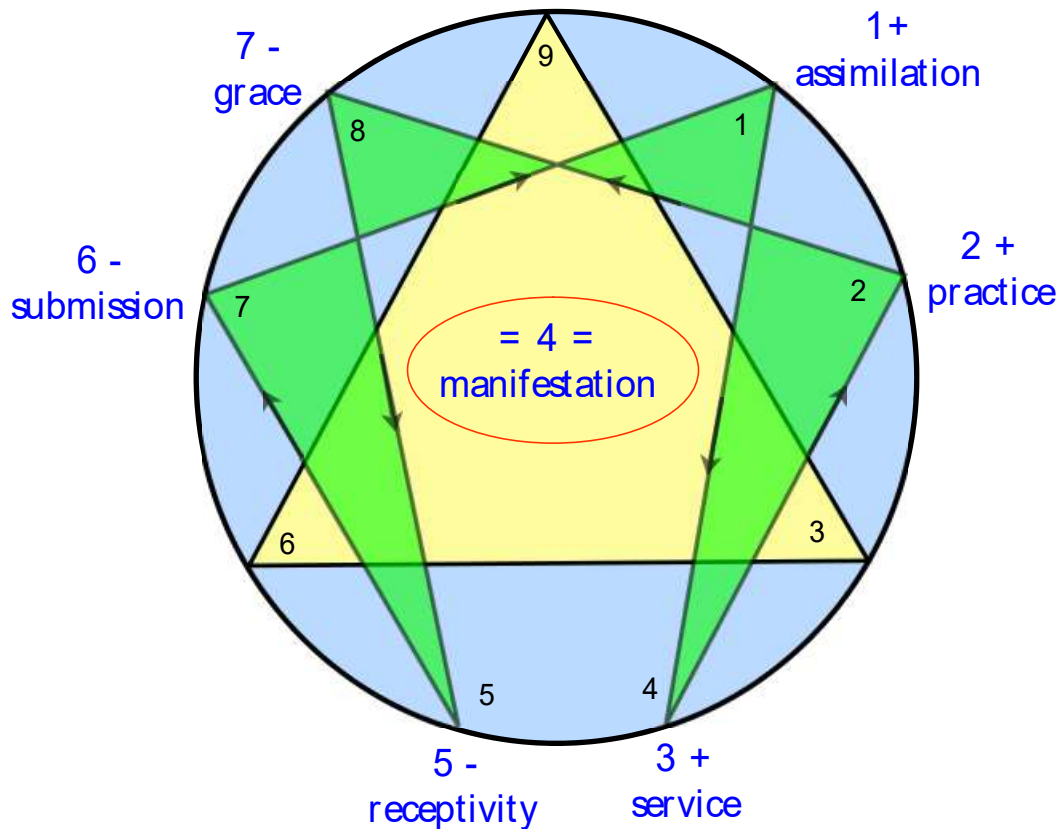
J.G.Bennett

An important distinction of this sevenfold work is that it is not about privileging the inner over the outer. In conventional society ‘success’ is considered to be outer achievement. In ‘spiritual’ society inner transformation and higher states like samadhi are considered achievement. This third viewpoint is beyond both and privileges the Work as a cosmic process of conscious evolution of the intelligent cosmic structure. Humanity has the task and is given the possibility of being a conscious agent in this process here on planet earth.

This agency is operating at a deeper reality than our limited understanding of cause and effect. We can participate in the Work by the balance of affirmation and receptivity that enable conditions for a third force to enter. It does not act if the ego is assuming that it is the agent. In yoga there is a principle nishkama karma – “action without concern for the fruits of action”. We find ourselves carrying out some task which we cannot justify to our friends and colleagues or even ourselves but we are guided to plant certain seeds for future needs that we are only dimly aware of. The ego muddies the waters by desiring thanks or praise but this can invalidate the action.

Nevertheless, creative change is taking place and new conditions are coming into being. These may be on large scale in a present moment of even hundreds of years. They may be subtle unexpected changes in societies and communities (perhaps some of what are called ‘tipping points’ are a result of this). They may be a surprising shift in the emergence of an individual suddenly able to fulfil a role without apparent qualifications.

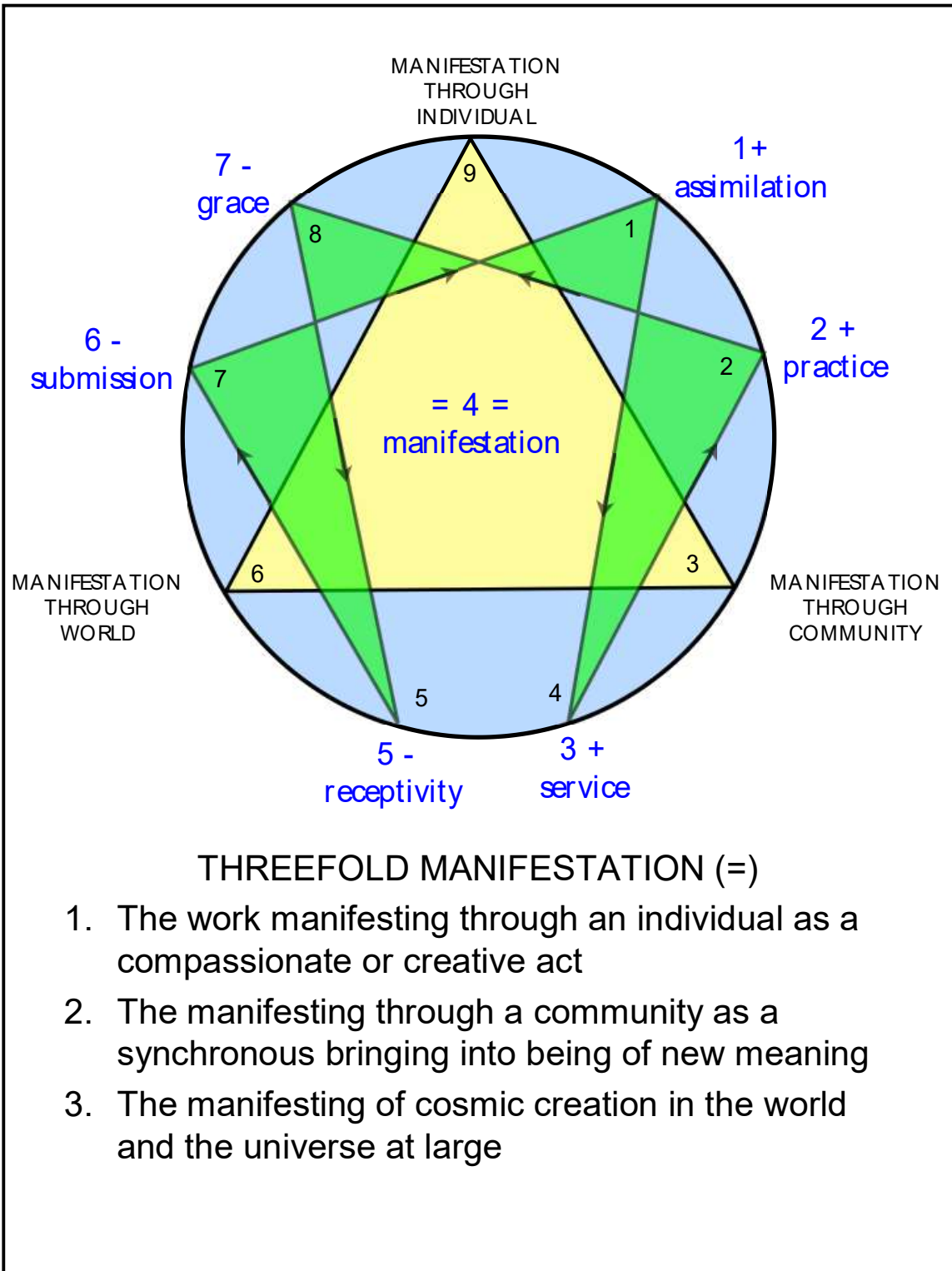
[4] Manifestation



MANIFESTATION (=)

- Being an instrument of the spiritual world
- Fulfilling a role where self is of no importance
- Through the 3rd force everything real is created
- “It” takes over and “it” does – Zen
- Transmitting in a state of nothingness
- The mystery of creative power while doing nothing

Threefold Manifestation



EXAMPLES

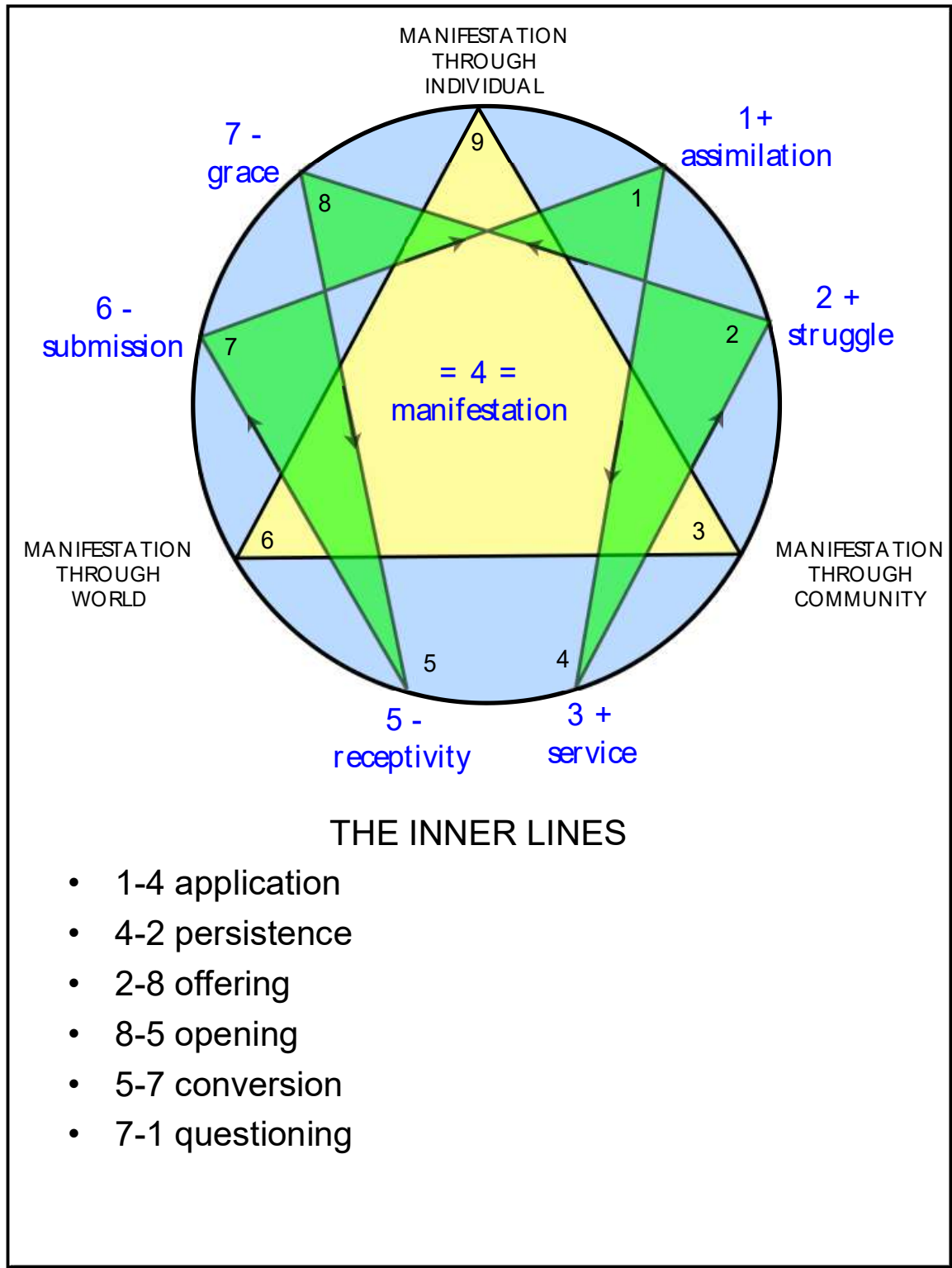
In the epoch currently in transition to the current emerging *Synergic Epoch*, humanity has been guided and to some extent protected by remarkable individuals who exhibited gifts of teaching, healing and changing the direction of human affairs. We know of them, for example, as the great founders and leaders of religions. But we do not know of the invisible influencers who keep a low profile, make no public claims and remain hidden in plain sight.

However, as the new epoch emerges the reconciling emphasis is shifting to what we might call distributed leadership. Rather than the remarkable individual who has been through the hero's journey, there are multiple *individuals* who may appear initially in a conventional role and yet be transmitting something from a higher dimension. Increasingly, what we might call 'ordinary folk' are discharging this role. The old way of hoping for a saviour is no longer effective. Instead, vastly complex spiritual collaborations and resonances are what is being required.

Thus the reconciling force which enters through *communities* is becoming more important. But these new communities are not sectarian, ethnic or political. They share common values of cosmic sustainability, individual development and creative collaboration oriented to higher values and ethics. Their principal role in the work is societal transformation. They are largely unknown to each other at this time.

The reconciling force which comes through what we have called *world* is an awakening to humanities place in a cosmic scheme of things in an intelligent and living universe. The physical expansion of our view of the cosmos gained through science is a platform for explorations in other dimensions. I have called this exploration cosmic ecology.

The Inner Lines



1-4 Application [assimilation → service]

The purpose of study and assimilation, as well as to develop a foundation of relevant knowledge and method, is to become more able to contribute to society through taking on that study. This counter balances the risk of a limited egoic attachment to what one is learning.

4-2 Persistence [service → struggle]

Unless we are persistent and consistent in how we work at bringing our studies to life, their value will not be realized. Some things are difficult to learn in practice and we need to keep at it to grow substantial capacity.

2-8 Offering [struggle → grace]

We inevitably have short fall and deficiencies in our learning and work. Without recognizing we have an inner guide we can become demotivated or, worse, believe we have learned what we need to, We offer our work to the greater whole trusting that further insights will come.

8-5 Opening [grace → receptivity]

Our development is highly constrained without input of higher energy. This cannot be demanded but we can cultivate an open state which can enable higher energies to open up our potential and practice. In traditions this is called shakti, baraka, blessing or spirit.

5-7 Conversion [receptivity → submission]

Conversion is usually thought of as switching belief systems but here we mean something different. It is the conversion of self-doubt into inner certainty that we are on the right path. This is not a 'once and for all' step but a recurring set of steps at any stage as we spiral around the enneagram

7-1 Questioning [submission → assimilation]

Ultimately, the deepest mark of our humanity is that we deeply question 'who am I?', 'what am I in this universe?', 'what is the meaning of life?' The way to find answers is to deepen not-knowing so that more of the mysteries of existence can unfold. We find new knowledge and experience and the cycle continues. Liberation reveals ever expanding awareness of the qualitative infinity.

Attunement exercises

Transforming these diagrams and words into real action requires us to practice certain things. Some of these practices need keeping up for years. Others may be episodic to help gain a certain insight or build up certain psychic substances in ourselves. Some are concerned with the transformation of energies.

To help make a connection between the theory of the sevenfold work and real practice I invite you to engage in a series of experimental exercises. They are not aiming to cover the seven-fold work as practice but any one of them might provide a useful key to change state and engage better.

These involve your intention and your attention. They are not about making yourself a 'good person', they are about gaining a very practical self-insight. Reflect on what you are seeing as a result of performing the exercise. They can be done in any order and whenever you feel ready.

Attention Exercise

Place your attention on the object. Hold it there as steadily as you can. Without losing that, divide your attention so that you are aware of sitting there in a state that is paying attention to the object. Stay as relaxed as possible.

Self-recollection Exercise

Relax your head, limbs, torso. Attend to breathing counting up to 10. Hover on the edge between being 'outside' and 'inside'. Who is having this experience?

Self-observation Exercise

Stand up and adopt for you an unusual posture. Hold it for 30 seconds. When the signal for time up take a snapshot of yourself. What are you sensing in your body? What are you feeling in your emotions? What is going on in your head?

Sensing Exercise

Relax seated. Sense each limb in a cycle of four and then skip one limb and repeat, continuing and so on back to the starting point – four cycles

Breathing Exercise

Breathe in and out in a relaxed rhythm. When the breath is in, split your attention into two. One part follows the out breath externally. The other notices that something in air is retained. No interest in where it might go – just note it.

Visualisation Exercise

Think of a simple act to perform in another part of the room. Mentally visualise your body going through this, including picturing your posture, limb movement, even emotional state. Hold the image as steady as possible. Commit to doing it. Leave your self to just do it at some moment in the next minute or so. When you have done it, take a snapshot.

Letting go Exercise

Take the question “who am I?” whenever something comes up in your mind gently attend to it with the assertion “not this” then let go. Repeat as needed.

A Week of Inner Work

A useful practice is to occasionally set yourself to cycle around the seven-fold work enneagram, dedicating a specific week to do this. The idea is to take a different line of work following the octave of the days of the week. So on Monday take Assimilation and pick one task to attend to that day. Review at the end of the day any learnings that have occurred. Repeat with the other lines of work as shown in the following table.

Note: this is a ‘tuning up’ practice not intended to be a regular weekly practice. In the intervals between trying this take up your work in an intuitive and organic way.

A Week of Inner Work

DAY	LINE OF WORK	REMINDERS
MONDAY	1 Affirming - ASSIMILATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking effectual knowledge • Initiative to make things come • Dexterity in conscious action • Research into Cosmic Laws • Pursue questions to the end
TUESDAY	2 Affirming – STRUGGLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitting ‘yes’ against ‘no’ • Evoking inner separation • Transform negative emotions • Acts of renunciation • Developing a strong mind/heart
WEDNESDAY	3 Affirming – SERVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrifice for the needs of the future • Care for the human environment • Taking on intentional suffering • Working for the good of all • Fulfilling duties
THURSDAY	4 Reconciling – MANIFESTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a vehicle for spiritual work • Fulfilling a role without self-importance • Open to mystery of act without acting • Preparation, offer, taken over • Attunement to the third force
FRIDAY	5 Receiving – RECEPTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing myself to be taught • Enabling through magnetisation • Letting the Teaching come through • Being in the presence of the awakened • Conscious stealing of higher energies
SATURDAY	6 Receiving – SUBMISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting go without reservation • Listening to and obeying the inner Master • Undertaking decision discipline • Awakening conscience • Listening to higher centres
SUNDAY	7 Receiving – GRACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help from helplessness • Unplanned unintended waking up • Pure heart perception • Beyond time and space • I AM THAT original Self

Appendix – 'Life is real only then when I am'

This is the title of Gurdjieff's third book in his trilogy 'All and Everything.' It is a strange book, part personal history, part description of certain knowledge, a rare ancient manuscript which is very hard to decode. And it ends in the middle of a sentence!

The following extract might give you a small clue to the gist of it.

And thus, every man, if he is just an ordinary man, that is, one who has never consciously "worked on himself" has two worlds, and if he has worked on himself, and has become so to day "candidate for another life", he has even three worlds

a man who is related to only two worlds, can never do anything; on the contrary, everything is done through him. In everything, he is but the blind instrument of the caprices of his outer and inner worlds.

The highest esoteric science calls such a man "a man in quotation marks"; in other worlds he is named a man and at the same time is not a man.

The first is the outer world – in other words, everything existing outside him, both what he can see and feel as well as what is invisible and intangible for him.

The second is the inner world – in other words, all the automatic processes of his nature and the mechanical repercussion on these processes.

The third world, depending neither upon his "outer world" nor upon his "inner world"; that is to say, it is independent of the caprices of the processes that flow in him as well as the imperfections in these processes that bring them about.

The "I" in a real man represents that totality of the functioning of his general psyche whose factors have their origin in the results of contemplation, or simply in the contact between the first totalities, that is, between the factors of his inner world and of his outer world.

These extracts perhaps give you taste of the very different angle that this teaching takes for most of the usual secular and spiritual teachings. So much so that they raised for me the question as to what NATURAL SPIRITUALITY might be, shorn of all the outer and inner confusion.

Gurdjieff died in 1949, when I was 12 years old. My search was for those who might impart the similar taste of reality. One of them is Nisargadatta Maharaj, an Indian jnani who left his body in 1984.

Nisarga means 'natural' and Datta is the triune reality which combines, in traditional terms, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. As I see it Brahma is the 'outer world' or Creation. Vishnu is the "inner world" or Sentience. Shiva is the third world which is immortal and impervious to corruption. (Shiva drinks the world poison and simply holds it in his blue throat without harm.)

So here is Maharaj's take in one of his talks in Mumbai.

Maharaj:

I am trying to tell you: Give up all this trash, whatever you are studying in the name of religion, in the name of spirituality. Understand only one thing. That godly principle is there, that "I-am-ness" or consciousness – that is the godliest of principles. It is there only so long as the vital breath or life force is there. This vital breath has five aspects and is called panchaprana. It is the motive force for all activities. When the five aspected force is there, then only this quality of beingness is there, which is called guna. This beingness at present is your nature – you are that only. So worship that principle. That quality, the touch of "I-am-ness" or consciousness, is something like the sweetness of the sugar cane.

The sugar cane is there, the inside fibrous material is there, and the sweetness is the ultimate. Similarly in this case, the final thing is the quality or the touch of beingness – that is the Ishwara² principle. You are that, abide in it and worship that only. Then only will you reach and abide in the eternal peace, and not discussing any other precepts regarding spirituality.

Where there is vital breath, the knowledge "I am" is present. There being no vital breath, the knowledge of "I-am-ness" is absent. Take full advantage of the naturally available capital with you – that is, your life force and the knowledge "I am" together with that motive force which is the life force, the vital breath. And that is not something apart from you; you are that only. Investigate and study this exclusively.

² The inner ruler

The sum and substance of my teaching is this: Don't be dishonest to your vital breath; worship that only, abide in that only, accept it as yourself. And when you worship in this manner, it can lead you anywhere, to any heights – this is the quintessence of my talks.

Henceforth, you are to be identified with the vital breath. Then you will realize, like the sweetness in sugar cane, that this touch of "I-am-ness", which is dwelling in the vital breath, will open up. Assimilate it, and so long as the vital breath is flowing through you, abide in that. If the vital breath is there, you are there and so is Ishwara.

In such simplified fashion, nobody has expounded this profound knowledge.

With firm conviction, you abide in this knowledge "I am" only: bereft of body-mind sense, only "I am". If you dwell therein, if you be that only, in due course, it will get mature. And it will reveal to you all the knowledge. And you need not go to anybody else.

In the tradition of Dattatreya the symbology is the three in one, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The gift of 'real I' in the deeper Yoga teachings originating in Kashmir is the realization of the Supreme Identity.

Here are some essential teachings from this teaching.

Foundational consciousness is characterized by absolute freedom of knowledge and action.

The bondage of the empirical individual is due to an innate limiting condition – ignorance of our essential nature.

When through grace there is the emergence of cosmic consciousness then this transcendental consciousness becomes a constant feature even of the three states of waking, dream and profound sleep. It is not only in meditation but also in the usual, normal course of life that one experiences the delight of the transcendental consciousness.

DRAFT