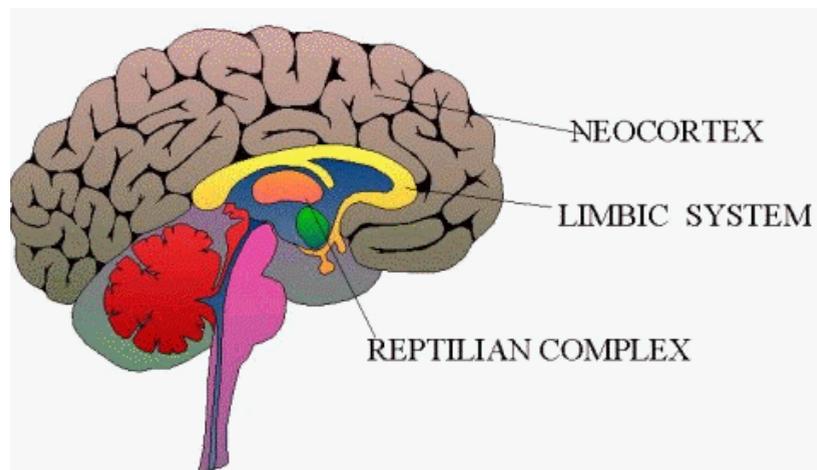


Enneagram in Light of Neuro . . .

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



These three centers correspond to three different ways of being. According to the evolutionary vision of MacLean, it's as if we had three different brains, each characterized by behaviors and deep rooted connotations of character that are typical of the center itself.

Reptilian Brain

The first brain, *reptilian* (instinctive center), is connected to automatism, the spontaneous and unconscious acts, for example the heart and the digestive system. This center is working to ensure the *physical and psychological survival of the individual*, it is the source where energy, motivation and actions originate.

Enneagram types 1, 8 and 9 use primarily this center to adequately address the different situations of life. The digestive system and the area of the solar plexus are very involved here, hence we call them "belly types."

At the level of mind, our memories, including those stored mostly unconsciously, are strongly related to this center. Nobel laureate Eric Richard Kandel describes the long-term memory system as two-fold: the explicit, autobiographic that can be expressed in words, and also the *implicit underground memory, not remembered, as it cannot be verbalized*, as it has been created by sensations and emotions, rather than words; a *somatic memory, that are all connected to the reptilian brain*.

In the first two years of infancy experiences are mostly recorded by this form of memory which is mostly managed in the center for instinctive emotions, the amygdala. Given that such memories were mostly not conscious, they can't easily be remembered, recorded or released, without precise psychobody work.

This unconscious memory is in fact the base, the backbone, the "mother" of the individual's personality. It continues and endures over time, influencing the individuals emotional, cognitive and affective life. I would say *it is here where the enneagram archetypes and their functions are determined*.

Limbic Brain

The feeling center, the *limbic* brain, is the place for emotions, affectivity, aspirations and relationships. It is mainly concerned with the present. Types 2, 3 and 4 use primarily this part of the brain as it's centered

around relationships with the people. It is here that the heart and circulatory system are mostly involved.

In neuroscience, *psycho neuro endocrino immunology* (PNEI), investigates the relationship between the psyche, the nervous system, the endocrine and the immune system. It is through neuropeptides, the small protein-like molecules (peptides) used by neurons to communicate via pathways with each other and to transmit the signals needed between the brain and the body. The neuro-

peptides are signaling molecules as they convey emotions and psychological as well as physical stimuli that elicit and maintain the unconscious responses in every part of the body.

It is well established now that emotions are, first of all, primarily physiological event, closely related to the unconscious, to the experiences, although not remembered, that will affect all mind and body functions.

Neocortex

The *neocortex*, finally, is the seat of the higher-order brain functions that defines human possibilities concerned with making sense of the self and the world by using reasoning, imagination, and the study of different possibilities and perspectives.

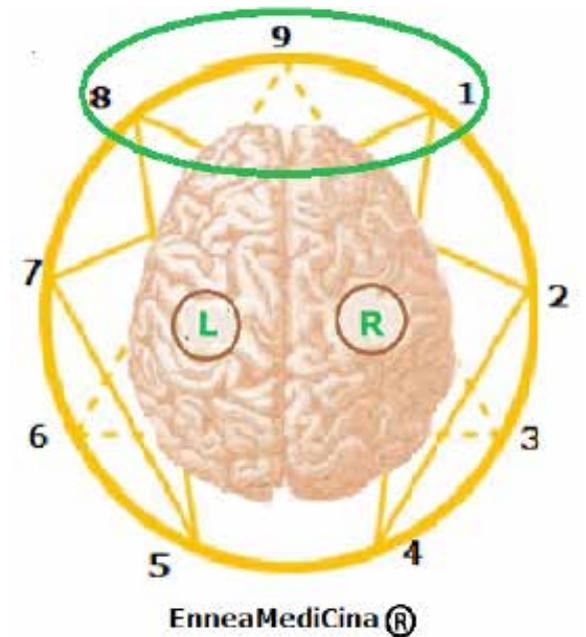
The enneagram "head types" 5, 6, and 7, use primarily this center for information and rationalization. This operative center consists of the central nervous system, the brain, and the spine.

According to the neuroscientist Goldberg Elkhonon, the right hemisphere of the human brain deals with what's new, while the left hemisphere deals with the well-developed and established configurations and stereotyped concepts, so all new information is first processed in the right hemisphere and then sent to the left where a model is created.

Parts of the right brain, while mainly dealing with emotional processes, are also involved with reasoning, decision-making and processing of thoughts. It appears that as the brain ages, the ability to learn new things decreases due to an emotional rigidity that discourages new discoveries and experiments as well as creating new models.

Coming back to the Enneagram, we find that types 2, 3 and 4 are positioned more in the right hemisphere connected to news, and analysis of the emotional content of experiences; whereas types 5, 6 and 7 occupy the left side of the model, assigned with the analysis and meaning of words and the creation of operational models. Above, the instinctive center with types 8, 9 and 1, takes in the dialogue between the left and right cerebral hemispheres and offers a visceral gut response.

The personality masks serve to protect the individual's survival and are nothing more than a con-



sequence of the interaction between the centers, between genetics and epigenetics.

In conclusion, everything is in a state of constant vibration, including the human DNA. We can say that the rhythm and pace respond to different emotional states. Scholars speak of a closely woven network that is connecting all matter through vibrational events.

DNA acts like an antenna, as an electric capacitor, an oscillating circuit able to receive and transmit electromagnetic waves and therefore information.

The nine 'traps', or 'passions' of the Enneagram (pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony, lust, deception and fear) symbolize impediments of character that prevent energy to flow freely, by hampering the activation of genes within the DNA?

On the other hand, could it be that moving in the opposite direction of the Enneagram arrows, would be a way to activate the motion towards integration of psyche and soma? •

Liliana Atz is the creator of *EnneaMediCina*. A psychologist, adept at Traditional Chinese Medicine, and a Tai Chi Chi Kung and Shiatsu trainer, Liliana has also authored *EnneaMediCina* as well as a number of trade articles and publications.

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