

WORKING WITH SCULPTURES

As an enneagram teacher in the oral tradition I have had experience in *some* interesting methods of bringing the enneagram to the world. I could tell you about our 'Café de l'Enneagramme', which we use as a short introduction in order to interest people in the enneagram. I could also write something about the use of action metaphors. Or I could even say something about using trained actors for handling 'cases' provided by participants in the Personal Development Training for trade and industry. But since working with actors seems somewhat delicate in the oral tradition, I have chosen, as a real seven, to postpone this subject temporarily until the next edition.

What I would like to do is to give you some more information about working with 'sculptures'. We all need language in order to express ourselves and to understand each other. But we also know that an image often says more than a thousand words. So why don't we start a panel by making an image – a sculpture? And why don't we use such sculptures to obtain a deeper understanding of the various types? While I would rather that you experience this in a workshop, I will however try to describe how this works.

During my certification I asked the Four panel, after a short introduction, to make a sculpture of me, in which the most important four characteristics were to be represented, from the panel's point of view. I sat in front of the panel and the public as a 'lump of clay'. The Fours held a short discussion and then, within a few minutes, they made what they considered to be a typical 'fourish statue' out of me. They bent one of my knees to the ground, so that I was only partly upright, and they lifted my head a little and pointed one of my arms upwards at an angle. My other hand was placed 30cm in front of my face. I had to look through my eyelids to beyond the horizon.

I sat there as a Four sculpture for about a minute. The Fours were really satisfied with the result! During the making of the sculpture it appeared that the members of the panel had experienced a kind of emotional arousal. They were virtually immediately totally involved in the project. The further the creative process progressed, the more I was aware of the feelings and energy of the panel as I came to be sitting as the image they were creating, maybe even more than words can say.

The elicited behavior during the creative process, and the meaning of the sculpture itself as well as my own sensory awareness gave me many starting points for asking questions about how the panelists relate themselves to certain topics and themes. Doing this makes the panelists talk about themselves on the basis of their own participation in this little exercise. Of course you must conduct the panel in such a way that not only the sculpture itself is the subject of conversation. The sculpture only acts as an introduction to enable the leader to ask the panel about their reactions and experiences arising from the sculpture."

Another application of 'sculptures' can contribute to a better understanding of your own type as well as of other types. It is worthwhile trying to feel the attitudes, emotions, physical tension and especially the energy of your security point as well as your stress point. You can try to identify yourself with another type by getting under the other type's skin, as it were. For instance, as a seven you could ask a five to make a five-sculpture of you. He can enable you to experience being focused and sober. You can try to feel the tension of his body and the focus of his attention, in the way that he experiences them.

The power of working like this is that you can form an idea of the feelings and recognize the other type's energy under your skin, in your heart. After that you can exchange ideas about the experience with your sculptor. You can talk about breathing, the meaning of attitudes and postures, feelings and energy, and so on. Making sculptures from each other is of course also an excellent instrument for getting touch with the energy of the three centers.

I would recommend working with sculptures at the beginning of a panel (after the introduction) in a two-day introductory workshop. We have already been very successful with this in several in-company workshops with HR-consultants, professionals and managers.

The other application of 'sculptures' is more suitable for an advanced workshop in which people already know their type a little better and where the accent is more on personal growth and personal development. This has worked very well in an advanced workshop with young management trainees from an insurance company. All types were represented. We decided to work only on making sculptures of security points. We did it in threes: 3-6-9, and as far as possible with 8-5-7, 5-7-1, 7-1-4, and so on. Now and then we changed around in order to give everyone an opportunity to experience his or her security point. So the One tried to experience the feelings and energy of the Seven in the sculpture the Seven made out of the 'One-clay'. For the Seven it was a challenge to make a sculpture of the One out of the clay of his stress point. The Four could feel the innate energy of the One in his own body within the sculpture the One made of the 'Four-clay'.

The exchange of experiences in these small groups is of course very important. When you walk from one group to the other (we had two teachers), you can follow these exchanges to some extent. Some interesting questions and positive remarks were made during the plenary session.

As you know, for teachers in the oral tradition there are at the moment several ways to introduce the enneagram. You can tell and teach your audience about the enneagram. You can hold lively panels in which people can recognize the attitudes and perspectives of the types in their own authentic personal stories. You can work with repeating questions and meditation, and carry out typing-interviews for individuals.

These methods are all very deep and useful for the person involved. They all suit our oral tradition very well. They urge the listeners to get inside themselves and to recognize their type by themselves. I like these methods a lot. Nevertheless, I think that there are more interesting ways of working with the enneagram. I read in the last *Talk* that Sister Suzuki in Japan thought up the method of people drawing pictures to express their inner feelings in place of panel discussions. Perhaps we could treat serious matters in a more playful way in order to tune in the various learning styles of the types, and also to experience the different energies of the types and centers in a lively, interactive and sensitive way.

At the European Enneagram Conference in Speyer (Germany, 1999) and Zurich (Swiss, 2000) I introduced this way of working for the first time. The workshop was called Sculptures and Action metaphors. I hope to run that workshop again, but as a certified enneagram teacher, don't hesitate to work with 'sculptures' in your own workshops. It will probably provide you with some interesting experiences. Try it and let me know how it goes! Later we can exchange our experiences in more depth.

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