

close to your eyes,” Mary responded, “release your customary focus, and move the page slowly away until you see the hidden picture.” There was a moment of silence while Jean experimented with this new way of seeing. “Ah!” she exclaimed. “It’s a crystal ball!”

Coaching Style Six

Cal Norris called Mary because he was burned out in his teaching job and excited about the possibility of becoming a professional coach. He’d found her web site and was intrigued by the Enneagram. “No question I’m a Six,” he announced, and proceeded to give her examples of how his self-doubt had been triggered by administrative changes and by perceived criticisms from the unpredictable school principal.

An open, endearing, and impetuous man in his late thirties, Cal was interested in the possibility of being financially independent, but he had some worries. He wanted to know all the details about going into business for himself. What was coaching really all about? What would be required to market himself? Who were his potential clients? How would he know? In particular, Cal wanted to know what could go wrong. Was he dreaming to think he could exceed his modest but secure income?

When you coach Sixes, you will build initial trust by giving lots of details and by holding nothing back, so they don’t assume or look for a hidden agenda. Mary was attuned to this in her first conversation with Cal, so she maintained a balance between encouraging his excitement and outlining the specific barriers he’d have to overcome to become successful in his own business. He was enthusiastic and eager to learn during their next two coaching sessions. Mary reinforced this in an e-mail following their second meeting: “I’m continually renewed by your quick absorption of insights and your unusually high self-awareness.”

Cal came to their third coaching session with a troubled look on his face. He said, “I noticed at your web site that you’ve created development plans for Sixes. What should I be working on?” Mary realized that the work they’d done wasn’t satisfying Cal’s doubt because she’d been building on his positive skills and potential. She asked, “What’s behind your question?” His answer told her that he’d been waiting for the other shoe to drop: “My perception from reading about the Enneagram is that people don’t see for themselves where they’re stuck. Surely you see some problems with me that you haven’t talked about yet.”

*To fear the worst often
cures the worst.*

Shakespeare
Troilus & Cressida

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You'll notice lots of clues in early interactions with clients that lead you to good guesses about their Enneagram style. This doesn't mean that you approach them directly with your observations about their Enneagram patterns. It probably won't help a Six, for example, to be told, "You're driven by fear." But the process of your interaction with clients is rich fodder for learning. Mary used this opportunity to show Cal how his doubt of others was a Six pattern that showed up when he assumed she was hiding something dreadful from him.

Coaching is a partnership in which clients begin to find solutions to their own dilemmas. This is especially vital when you work with Sixes. If you become an authority you can unwittingly reinforce their ambivalence in relationship with you. Instead of telling Cal where he might be stuck, Mary gave him a list of strategies for increasing self-awareness in Sixes. Together they added to the list and Cal chose the areas he wanted to work on: (1) Be aware of my habit of suspecting compliments and modify my "ESP" by focusing on others' positive thoughts instead of hidden agendas. (2) Analyze my underlying assumptions about those in power and ask, "How am I giving my power away? (3) Don't assume anything about who's in charge; develop a partnership by asking others to clearly state their expectations and together create guidelines for how we're going to interact. (4) Take my fears seriously, but also ride them out before reacting, do reality checks, and use my imagination to picture positive future outcomes.

As they learn their Enneagram style's typical patterns, Sixes will begin to see themselves quite readily. Your efforts as a coach will show them how their suspicions of others and self-doubt can be transformed to a level of trust in themselves and others that leads to effective action.

Opposes Self

Sixes can be the most contradictory of the nine styles because they have phobic (overtly fearful) and counterphobic (doing what they fear) manifestations. Some Sixes will seem clearly phobic or counterphobic while most display a mixture of the two, as did Jean. When phobic, Sixes are afraid to act; when counterphobic they act in order to overcome their fear, but may do so without thinking through the consequences.

As a coach, you will usually work with Sixes on their fears and reactions to fear. Even counterphobic behavior is based on fear. When they're operating more in a counterphobic mode, you may have to work your way through their overtly challenging and risky behavior to see the fear and self-doubt. One of Mary's clients, Ray, was tough and adventurous. "I come from a working class family,"

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Pay attention to these four habits of in-the-box Sixes:

- Opposes self*
- Gives power away and frightens self*
- Sorts for negatives*
- Substitutes worry for action*