

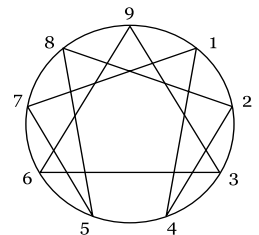
Breaking Out of the Box

Visiting the Guru

Once upon a time a young man asked a famous guru who was visiting town if he could become her student. The guru kindly asked, “Why do you want to become my student?” The young man poured out his troubles, explaining that his life was a mess. He said his house was a good example of how he just couldn’t make his life work. The house had falling plaster, broken and dirty windows, an awful carpet, and even the doors and windows didn’t work. The guru listened carefully and said, “I do not think you are ready to be my student, but I am going to give you a gift. Please return to your house.” The young man left disappointed, but was cheered by the thought of a gift.

The next day a truck pulled up outside his ramshackle house and unloaded a beautiful couch. The young man was delighted. When the truckers asked him where he wanted it, he had them put it up against one of the worst walls in his living room. After they left he sat and looked at the couch with pleasure. But only for a while. He noticed how terrible the beautiful couch made his wall look, so he decided to clean up that wall. When he sat down to admire his work, he soon realized that the other walls looked terrible by comparison. So he decided to clean up the other walls. When he again admired what he’d done, he now realized that this room was in sharp contrast to the rest of the house. You can imagine how the story ends: From one room, he was moved to transform the whole downstairs, then the upstairs, then the outside of the house, the yard, the block—and eventually himself.

As a coach you will frequently be tempted to respond to a client’s explicit request for change: “Help me organize the clutter in my house; get the job of my dreams; manage my finances; get along better with my spouse, my boss, my co-worker.” You probably have well-tested interventions—time management techniques, templates for business plans, communication models—any one of which can



promise some success with your clients. Many of these need to be understood as quick fixes. There is nothing wrong with quick fixes in the short term. They can support and motivate your clients and cheer them on to further and more meaningful work.

However, you may reinforce some underlying dysfunctional patterns by helping your clients accomplish something that only looks like fundamental change. This is change of a sort, which we call first-order change. It solves a problem within a box or worldview without examining the parameters of the box. A first-order change addresses one of your client's symptoms, but leaves a more fundamental dynamic untouched.

Do not forego the chance to help clients achieve more profound change. If you only help them organize their home or office you may have lost the opportunity to explore the source of their clutter, how a cluttered office reflects their mental patterns, and how that same pattern appears in other areas of their lives. If you only work with them to improve one relationship, they may not see the underlying convictions and habits that affect all their relationships.

In and Out of the Box

We've used a number of personality assessments in our coaching practice that are great for measuring behavior. But they don't do what the guru did for her student—alter someone's perception of the whole world. We have found that small symbolic changes on the level of Enneagram style give clients a change in perspective similar to the effect the new couch had on the young man. This can have a deep and powerful impact on their lives and those whose lives they touch.

Small symbolic changes on the level of Enneagram style can have a deep and powerful impact on clients' lives.

We suggest that you encourage such *second-order* change in your clients: a fundamental shift. Second-order change can transform their inner experience so profoundly that they perceive their world quite differently and alter their behavior spontaneously. To bring about these deeper changes, you can ask your clients questions that lead them to:

- see how their patterns play out in ways that do not serve them well;
- break their habits, shake up the inner structure of self-defeating patterns;
- become open to new perspectives, willing, even eager, to face the unknown;
- create a specific vision of what is possible, one that brings them greater meaning and instills hope;

- develop and reinforce their ability, understanding, and willingness to make significant change in their lives.

For example, Clarence worked with Roy, an Enneagram Two, who felt trapped in his job. When in the box, Roy had subsumed his own needs to those of others, at work and at home. He had been unable to see the costs of that pattern, even though he was highly stressed. He suffered from sleeplessness and constant sciatic pain, but would not allow himself to take sleeping or pain medication. Because of what he perceived as the potential effect on his grown children, he would not consider leaving a marriage that had been unsatisfying for many years. With coaching, Roy learned to set limits on doing others' work and left to head a company providing a new service in his field. Had the coaching ended here, Roy would have seen saying "no" to excessive work demands and becoming head of a company as signaling success. But this alone would have been a first-order change.

As he gained awareness of his underlying Enneagram pattern, and challenged his automatic responses, Roy began to notice the effects of second-order change. He took a stand for his personal vision and purpose, and held himself accountable to live in integrity with his highest good. The seed planted during coaching allowed him to take better care of himself while still using his gift of compassion for others. He found that his taking care of his wife had contributed to a co-dependent relationship. When he finally asked for a divorce, they were both freed to heal, and his children understood and continued to love him.

With second-order change, a Two took better care of himself while still using his gift of compassion for others.

Mary's style Three client, Karen, was familiar with the Enneagram and open to exploring the effects of her coping strategies on her business and personal life. Karen's drive to achieve, typical of a Three, was now targeted to make her marriage the best. She had been blaming her husband, Jack (an Eight), for what she considered unacceptably angry verbal battles. He felt no recourse but to attack her verbally in order not to feel vulnerable.

Karen and Mary rehearsed ways to counter Jack's verbal attacks without escalating their fights. This alone could have resulted in first-order change. But because Karen also reframed her interaction with Jack in Enneagram terms, she was able to step out of the box that defined him as the problem. She began to see how they both contributed to their difficulties, especially how her relentless insistence on an efficient discussion with complete closure, the pattern of an in-the-box Three, felt like an attack to him.

With second-order change, a Three and an Eight broke free of their automatic interaction patterns by discussing what they could do that would be different.

Notice the two levels of change. As long as they focused on strategies within the particular box created by the interaction of their Enneagram styles (negotiation strategies for Karen, anger management methods for Jack) they would be stuck in the illusion of only two choices (“Will we fight when we feel controlled or will we have a calm discussion?”). They would struggle within the automatic patterns they continued to create. By stepping out of the box and noticing their patterns, they were able to have discussions about their process: “Let’s stop and take stock of what we’re doing here that’s creating such pain. What could I as a Three and you as an Eight do that’s different, that would break our patterns?”

In *The Invitation*, Oriah Mountain Dreamer writes, “It doesn’t interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.” We acknowledge that transformational change is not easy, that we must be willing to stand in the fire with our clients, and they with us. People helped by a coach’s insights may realize their inner patterns but feel unmasked. This experience is unnerving and may raise other defenses. You can even anticipate that the ego, which controls the habitual coping pattern, will sometimes fight ferociously to resist such fundamental change. It is human nature not to face up to things about ourselves that are at odds with our carefully constructed worldviews.

Because clients may defend against changing even in the face of conscious determination, the way you provide help is vital. They will need your inspiration to believe in possibilities, and they will need to know that their inevitable discomfort can be transformed into energy for growth. Your unconditional positive regard and continued support will help them stay with the transformation process. As a good coach, you will lead your clients through whatever blocks have limited their potential.

First- and Second-Order Change

First-Order Change refers to behavioral change: learning new skills or capabilities that involve doing something better without necessarily examining or challenging underlying beliefs and assumptions. These are examples of first-order change only:

- a. Bill Danvers, a style Three, became Mary’s client because his peers saw him as going for the glory. In-the-box Threes are driven to succeed at any price. True to this worldview, Bill was in line to be president because of his spectacular sales results and because he’d taken all the credit, in spite of his

teammates' behind the scenes support. Moreover, after agreeing with his team on negotiation parameters, he made deals with customers that overrode these agreements. In the excitement of the deal, Bill focused only on how good it would feel to close the sale. He could practically hear applause in his mind.

With first-order change, a Three might meet his career goals but reinforce his worldview that it's important to look good.

Because he wanted the approval of his peers to get his promotion, he agreed to tell customers his deals were tentative. He also learned collaboration skills to improve relations with his peers, and came across more as a team player. These behavioral tools might have earned sufficient respect to support his promotion, even if Bill used his newfound skills only to meet his career goals. He might have continued to see his peers as less accomplished than he. Worse, Mary could have unwittingly reinforced Bill's worldview of how important it is to look good.

- b. Nancy Schwab's boss thought she was too negative and asked her to work with Clarence. Nancy is an Enneagram Six. Sixes want to protect against all negative possibilities in order to feel safe. From this worldview, it is quite natural to focus primarily on what can go wrong. Clarence coached Nancy to counter this tendency by using creative problem solving. Instead of saying, "That won't work because it will take too long," for example, she learned to incorporate her concerns into a solution statement: "I think that could solve our problem. Let's talk about how we can shorten the production time."

Nancy still had the worldview that the world is not safe and so looked for the negative contingencies, but she had a new skill. Her boss complemented her on sounding more positive and she was pleased to no longer be under the gun. At this point was the coaching successful? Nancy experienced a first-order change. However, she still lived in a world where she had to protect herself so she would feel safe. There was not yet a fundamental change.

With first-order change, a Six might sound less negative but still live in a world where she has to protect herself to feel safe.

- c. As a style Nine, Barry Foster held and tried to harmonize all points of view. He hired Mary because his boss wanted him to confront two people reporting to Barry who would not collaborate with him. Barry had been trying to resolve the situation with some fairly abstract e-mails outlining his vision for the department. Newly promoted, he found that his preferred style was not working. The two players who wouldn't collaborate with him were used to operating independently and not about to change spontaneously. Furthermore, his boss, Malcolm, was tough, and clear about his dissatisfaction with Barry's easy-going demeanor. Malcolm wanted Barry to be "more authoritative, to take charge and bring those people into line."

With first-order change, a Nine might confront performance problems but still seek structure from others.

Mary offered Barry some guidelines for confronting performance problems, and then showed him how to use relaxation and visualization techniques to increase his comfort level as he mentally rehearsed the impending confrontation. She and Barry might have felt they'd accomplished something significant if he became comfortable enough to actually get these two people with the program. Without examining and reframing his worldview, however, how much would Barry have changed? The transformational potential for Nines is to awaken, to release self-initiated energy, to focus on their own agendas. Look at what had happened with Barry. He worked with Mary because his boss was impatient with his consensus-seeking style. Mary offered a structure to help Barry deal with his problems. Where was Barry's agenda? How could Mary help him find it?

Second-Order Change occurs when clients can see things in a radically different way and break the illusions inherent in a worldview. This change illuminates possibilities that exist outside their customary frame of reference. The fundamental reshaping of underlying patterns makes it possible for them to do what they have never done before. Second-order change enfolds first-order change, and also goes beyond it.

On the level of second-order change, people observe themselves and ask questions about their automatic responses: "What is going on here? How do I judge events, interpret them, and feel bound to respond to them in a certain way?" They begin to notice self-fulfilling and self-defeating habitual patterns that were below their previous level of awareness. They become less defensive and more open to significant change.

An understanding of the Enneagram can provide an illuminating road map for what to look for at the individual and interpersonal levels.

- a. Bill Danvers, for example, began to notice how competitive he was and how he felt he must succeed no matter what it took. He then understood that his behavior was driven by his fixation as a Three to be recognized for his accomplishments. As he explored his own feelings and needs, he searched for an inner gyroscope that would guide him with more authenticity. He slowly became aware of messages he'd gotten that his worth depended on accomplishment. He recognized his longing to just be himself. Bill now saw that his focus on his own achievements often cost others their just recognition. In the past this reinforced his belief that he had to do everything himself in order to get results. Mary coached him to stay with the sensations

With second-order change, a Three breaks his pattern of competitiveness.

he experienced¹ when he became impatient with someone (a first-order skill in a second-order context). He was gradually able to stop his habitual response when feelings of competitiveness and need for approval began to grip him.

b. Nancy Schwab noticed her general tendency as a Six to anticipate what could go wrong and to look for hidden agendas. She learned to see how that coping strategy stemmed from self-doubt and fed her sense of powerlessness. In addition to learning how to approach problems with solutions, she began to see how she created a dangerous world in which she always had to have her antennae fully extended. Her pattern of thinking left out what could go right. With some coaching from Clarence, she learned to notice how she filtered out the positive, in existing information and in possibilities. As she became more balanced in her risk assessment, she needed less and less to defend herself from her boss's criticism. She saw that she had been negative, and that her behavior invited and reinforced his response. Clarence suggested that when Nancy realized she was focusing only on the negative, she take out a piece of paper, write down all the negative possibilities in the left-hand column, and counter these with positive possibilities in the right-hand column (a first-order skill applied in a second-order context).

With second-order change, a Six breaks her pattern of creating a dangerous world.

c. At the level of second-order change, Mary coached Barry Foster to step out of the box of his Nine coping strategy. He learned that his shy and somewhat humble behavior with his staff was the result of a kind of lethargy or inner immobility. He forgot himself when he merged with other points of view. He began to see how his habitual behavior invited others (especially his boss) to speak up for him. This pattern reinforced the message he got early in life that no one was interested in what he had to say. While holding this new awareness, Barry learned assertiveness techniques (first-order skill, second-order context) and began to loosen up a bit. He started expressing opinions more openly and directly. At first he was anxious about causing conflict, but his new understanding shed light on why he felt anxious, so he spoke up anyway.

With second-order change, a Nine breaks his pattern of letting others speak for him.

Transformational change is a matter of degree within second-order change. Once your clients have experienced a shift in their point of view, their habitual responses come into question. They will never be the same. Even if the habitual behavior comes up, they will experience it differently because they have now developed an observing self that recognizes the pattern. While they are likely to feel exhilarated during the process of change, they may also feel stunned, shocked, humiliated, disoriented, or even depressed.

¹See *Focusing*, by Eugene Gendlin.

The anthropologist Victor White first used the term *liminality* (from the Latin *limen*, meaning *threshold*) to describe the space between two stages of growth and consciousness. Or, as we have heard: “Whenever one door closes another opens, but it’s hell being in the hallway!” Jean Shinoda Bolen² refers to this in-between zone as a life passage, “a state in which we are neither who we used to be, nor who we are becoming.” She reminds us that we are more vulnerable in these times of liminality, but also more “psychologically receptive and open to new growth.”

Mary, a Nine, took a major step into that in-between zone in the spring of 1997. She knew that the transformation goal of a Nine is *active engagement*, and ended an Enneagram workshop with a deep commitment to stay aware of what she wanted and to ask for it. For a month she was excited and full of energy. Then she fell into a depression different from the familiar, transitory times of feeling a loss of energy. It took several months with her coach for Mary to be able to stay committed to setting boundaries instead of merging with others wishes, and to pursue her own agenda. She describes this as a “terrifying, amazing, and transforming roller-coaster ride.”

Why would any of us resist such joy of self-discovery? William Bridges makes a key point about “what most people refer to unthinkingly as ‘resistance to change.’”³ Change takes place when something old stops and something new starts. We resist this transition because it requires that we let go of a former identity, even though it stands in the way of the desired change.

*Transformation
requires that we let
go of a former identity
and this can be an
uncomfortable transition.*

Those who work with the Enneagram will find themselves on the path of transformation. Your clients may balk and stumble, but with your wise partnership they can hold the course of a potentially uncomfortable transition while they break through the patterns that have been holding them hostage.

Transformational change does not move in arbitrary directions. It requires us to let go of specific patterns that have shrunk our world and distorted our vision, to move toward the strengths of our personality style. The nine generic Enneagram descriptions detail the gifts and liabilities of each. A sensitive coach who knows the Enneagram can help clients appreciate their gifts while building awareness of self-defeating motivations and consequent behaviors.

- a. Bill, for example – the Three mentioned earlier – got in touch with his true feelings, and felt some shame at how he’d depended on recognition from others. He acknowledged to Mary that he’d always been impatient with feelings and group process, especially when they got in the way of the task at

² *Crossing to Avalon*

³ *Surviving Corporate Transition*

hand. But he became more emotional than he bargained for. He'd convinced his team that he was collaborating, but still worked deals to his advantage—a slip back into his Enneagram coping strategy. He tried to resist thinking of himself as someone who looked for approval and who had ignored others in his quest for success. Only because Mary helped him maintain focus on the desired changes was he able to tolerate his transitional discomfort. With Mary's encouragement and reinforcement, he began to spontaneously access his feelings and to engage in true collaboration.

A Three begins to spontaneously access his feelings and to engage in true collaboration.

- b. Nancy admitted to Clarence that she felt embarrassed to own up to her negative focus as a Six. She had always seen herself as a good contingency planner, almost psychic at times. She worried about her boss's criticism for days at a time, putting herself in a tailspin because the criticism hurt her feelings and damaged her self-image. She slipped back temporarily to the level of first-order change: she used the new techniques, but continued to accuse her boss of being unfair. Clarence knew that Nancy had to pull out of this tailspin if she was to experience an enduring transformational change. He encouraged her to keep balancing her negative expectations with positive ones, and she spontaneously began to notice both sides of the equation. This balance showed up naturally in her language and problem-solving capabilities. In this respect she was no longer the same person she had been. She now experienced herself and her world differently.

A Six balances negative expectations with positive ones and experiences her world differently.

- c. Barry felt somewhat depressed when he identified himself as a Nine. He feared that the Enneagram confirmed his deepest fears that he was a wimp. He wanted to change, but still experienced himself the same old way. He rehearsed with Mary how to confront his problem staff members, but avoided actually setting up a meeting to do so. He then asked Mary to tell him how to overcome his own resistance to change. She gently but firmly left the choices up to him, and Barry moved ahead step by step in spite of feeling stuck. He discovered that he cared passionately enough about his department's mission to fight for it. As he continued to claim what was important to him and to stand up for his beliefs, he no longer needed to use techniques to diminish anxiety because he *felt* less anxious and more energetic.

A Nine claims what is important to him and stands up for his beliefs.

More on Reframing

We have mentioned that it is possible for a coach to unwittingly recommend strategies that could hinder a breakthrough by reinforcing the client's fixed point

of view. Each Enneagram worldview is a narrow picture of reality. It is part of the coach's job to alter this illusory image by *reframing*: changing its context or description so it takes on new meaning. Here are some examples for the cases just reviewed:

Reframing means changing the context of a worldview so it takes on new meaning.

- a. Teaching Bill collaboration skills for interacting with his team had two layers. Mary showed him how collaboration would increase his chances for success. (This is an example of matching the client's worldview in order to be credible.) It was important, however, that the content of the coaching implicitly reframe the meaning of success. Mary told Bill his success would come through collaboration rather than competition. Here are some sample actions from a collaboration checklist she gave him that began to undermine his worldview as a Three that "I must be the best:"

- ___ share personal information to create a common ground.
- ___ give credit or recognition where warranted.
- ___ work to develop teamwork and cooperation in the group.
- ___ encourage exploration of differing viewpoints, attitudes, interests.
- ___ cooperate across functions to achieve company objectives.

In working with Bill (or any Three), however, it was vital to short-circuit his habitual methods of achieving recognition. If Mary praised Bill for becoming more effective, even in following the collaboration guidelines, that could have blocked second-order change by reinforcing his achievement coping strategy—his search for approval outside of himself. Because he and Mary had developed a trusting, caring relationship (a necessary ingredient for transformational change), she was able to reflect on Bill's reactions in such a way that he experienced failure as a good thing (because it snuck him out of the box of having to succeed).

A Three reframes failure as a good thing.

- b. Clarence gave Nancy a creative problem-solving technique that undermined her fixation on accusation as a Six. She had habitually looked for what could go wrong and why others were wrong. Focusing on solutions shifted her away from her habitual perspective. It enhanced the possibility of transformational change through self-empowerment. Clarence was explicit that this problem-solving technique was to help Nancy gain her own power and trust her own instincts, not to respond better to unwarranted criticism. If she had seen this as defending herself, that would affirm that the boss was too critical or unfair and reinforce her habitual powerlessness. Clarence reframed her blaming the

boss as a way of keeping herself powerless and reinforcing her self-doubt. This helped her to let go of strategies that kept her in the role of helpless victim and to see opportunities for self-empowerment.

A Six reframes blaming the boss as a way she has kept herself powerless.

- c. Mary had taught Barry how to be more assertive. This helped him speak up more readily for himself, instead of waiting to merge his views with those of others. He also heard himself when he was passive (“Well, uh, I don’t know, maybe we could... well, what do you think?”) or sometimes passive aggressive (“Do you really think this will work?”). He eventually stated his opinions more openly and directly (“This is what I think...”). It was important to frame Barry’s adoption of this communication tool as a way to develop self-knowledge and choose what he wanted, not as a way to avoid conflict. As he became more assertive, Barry did, in fact, express annoyance and even anger more openly and directly. This solved his problems with his wayward team members (which his boss applauded), but did not go down so well when he communicated strong opinions to his boss, who tended to up the ante in direct confrontation. Barry sought support and encouragement from Mary, but she was careful not to provide all the structure. If Barry just followed her directions, this would reinforce his Nine fixation of self-forgetting and make transformational change more difficult.

A Nine reframes assertiveness as choosing what he wants vs. avoiding conflict.

Of course you could use other strategies and other ways of reframing than the ones cited in the three cases above. The quality of the coaching relationship and your coaching skills make all the difference. You can enfold many first-order strategies for change within an overarching vision of second-order change. You will guide your clients to experiment with fieldwork that breaks old patterns and brings about new ways of feeling and thinking. An outward change is helpful, but it is even more helpful when it triggers an inner change—a transformation. Thoughtful reframing at the second-order level of change, along with caring support, can provide the necessary reinforcement to fully integrate that change.

Transformational coaches suggest fieldwork that breaks old patterns and brings about new ways of thinking and feeling.

In addition, the coaching relationship itself is a mini-laboratory for breakthroughs. Whatever the inner dynamics that brought your clients to coaching, they will most assuredly act them out with you. And don’t forget you have your own habits of attention. Always ask yourself if you are behaving in ways that help or hinder your clients’ growth. Be aware that how you interact with your clients makes a big difference in their progress. For example:

- a. Threes seek approval from outside themselves. They typically will list their accomplishments for you during each coaching meeting. Will you reinforce that in-the-box behavior by approving or will you help them see this habitual behavior as it occurs with you?
- b. Sixes seek authority and then challenge it. Will you be caught in this pattern? Will you let them turn you into an authority or will you comment if you see the pattern and use what happens during coaching to encourage transformation?
- c. Nines rely on others to provide structure. If you ask a probing question and find your Nine clients somewhat confused, will you jump in with a suggestion or will you be patient and encourage them to start anywhere—an arbitrary choice, a set of alternatives, or even a list of what they do not want to do?

Your clients will approach potential breakthroughs either as frightening ventures into the unknown or as potent explorations. How they move forward rests in the quality of your coaching. Transformational coaching requires that you: (1) be receptive, provide a safe harbor, listen deeply and empathically; and (2) take a stand and challenge their self-limitations. This is important especially when they (or you) are most discouraged.

Transformational coaches use their interactions with clients to listen deeply and challenge self-limitations.

Coaching like this requires devotion to your own transformation. You will improve your coaching as you learn about your Enneagram style. You can start to use your gifts more consciously and observe how your own patterns limit you and your clients. Then you can use whatever occurs in the coaching relationship as data for discussion.

While coaching a Two named John, for example, Mary faced him with his retreat from discussing a perceived criticism by her, even though he was clearly upset. He was still so tied to his pattern of focusing on her needs and feelings that he diverted attention from his own. After that session John wrote Mary an e-mail saying he felt she had betrayed his needs (a recurring theme for Twos). He wanted to stop coaching after the next session. Mary's first reaction was defensive: as a Nine she worried that she might have been too blunt, not kind enough to John. But she managed to stay centered, and not to take his attack personally. In his next coaching session, they were able to discuss the dynamic they had created and to explore how this same pattern showed up in John's other relationships. During this discussion Mary

helped John express his needs openly (difficult for a Two). She gently pulled him back to his own feelings when he tried to move the conversation back to her. He subsequently decided to continue with Mary as his coach.

In the chapters to follow you will find a detailed case description and coaching analysis for each of the nine Enneagram styles. Each chapter includes coaching tips specific to that style, targeted to both first- and second-order change. Before entering that world of specifics, however, we invite you to keep in mind some general principles about transformational change.

A Couch Against The Wall

We began this chapter with the story of a young man who received a gift that changed him for a number of reasons.

Stories and other forms of right brain communication can change us in ways and on levels that we often do not understand. When we do understand how that kind of communication works, we have a better grasp of how to coach someone to make profound changes.

In the story, the beautiful couch was set up against a wall with which it clashed. Spontaneous change occurs when perceptions can no longer be integrated in one's worldview. Sometimes a few small, artistically placed changes can be transforming because these alterations clash so unmercifully with the client's outmoded worldview.

When the couch went up against the wall, the young man saw what he had never seen, and in a context with which he was intimately familiar. The couch changed the way he saw the wall and his house—and his life. We all deal with images of reality. People who say things like, “Well, the reality is...” or “Get real” don't understand that no one gets reality straight. No one “tells it like it is.” So when you help change the way clients perceive things, they change the only reality anyone ever inhabits.

The couch on the wall reframed the young man's world by showing him that beauty could be present. The couch opened up a possibility; namely that his house and life could be attractive. That was news to him, conflicting with his worldview of despair and defeat.

Clients who suffer from their image of their world often act in accord with that image. Consequently, careful listening to clients has to come first. Every case is

A few small, artistically placed changes can be transforming because these alterations clash with the client's outmoded worldview.

unique. What is their world like? It will not do you any good to simply bring a couch to your client. The guru did not just send out a gift; she listened carefully to the young man's story, learned his worldview, and then graciously altered it. She entered the young man's world, looked for his metaphors of life; his assumptions, beliefs, and illusions; then gently put one thing in his life that defeated his defeat. Good coach. If he had just been told to clean up his house, the young man might have done it, even done it well, but he would have kept his inner world belief that he was doomed to failure.

Clients are always kind enough to have a problem. That problem, or symptom, will be stated as an inability to do something they want to do or a desire to stop doing something they don't want to do. Their problems are rooted in their Enneagram style.⁴ So don't look for solutions too quickly. First, you want to follow the symptom to its Enneagram taproot. Your clients will believe that their problem is impossible to solve, and it has always felt impossible. You have to have the courage to stand on the edge of this frightening world, see why their problem has seemed impossible, and then show them paths out. But you cannot lead them out unless you let them lead you in.

We are all used to objective, linear, analytic language—the language of the classroom—that goes by the name of reason. But that does not persuade or induce change. Sometimes it helps not to explain. The guru in the story did not. If she had sat down and explained why the young man had to change his worldview, nothing would have happened. The guru would have gained a reputation for wisdom and the young man might have come back to her, but his house would still be a mess.

Objective, linear, analytic language does not persuade or induce change. Transformational coaches encourage small symbolic changes that reframe a client's experience.

For real transformation, encourage small symbolic changes that reframe a client's experience. These may not seem logical. "A couch?" someone with a more left-brain approach might ask. "What's that supposed to do?" But look at what the wise guru accomplished with her symbolic gift.

We describe specific, right brain techniques for second-order change in the final chapter of this book. First, though, read the following case descriptions and coaching analyses of all nine Enneagram styles. When you learn the Enneagram, you will learn what couch to give to which client at what time.

⁴ We know this is a big claim, but we will back it up repeatedly.