

FOREWORD

Shock Point: The Enneagram in Burnout and Stress

by Chad Prevost · Foreword by Beatrice Chestnut and Uranio Paes

In a world where the anxieties of living and working were already becoming unbearable for most people most of the time, the recent global pandemic introduced even more sources of stress and fear—and perhaps unveiled those that had been simmering for a long time just under the surface. Lockdowns and the threat of contracting a deadly virus compounded the pre-existing anxieties of living in the world today, and many of us were pushed past our breaking points. In my over twenty years of practice as a psychotherapist, I never saw a time like the last years, in which every good therapist I know had a completely full practice. It's very rare for any of my therapist friends to have vacancies for new clients. It was never like this before.

We are all stressed these days. And now it's not an option to hide from all the pressures we experience or evade the psychological and emotional consequences.

It is in this context that Chad Prevost has written this book, *Shock Point: The Enneagram in Burnout and Stress*, a useful and timely guide to addressing one of the key challenges of our world today—how to cope with and minimize stress in our lives. In this book, Chad wisely draws on the Enneagram of personality, a uniquely effective tool for increasing self-awareness and emotional intelligence, to provide ways of understanding and dealing with the crisis of overwork and overwhelm that is currently plaguing so much of our world and our daily experience of being alive.

Chad first provides important information about stress and burnout—the increasingly frequent consequence of ignoring symptoms of stress until they result in some sort of breakdown of the human system—and then offers the Enneagram as a potential solution. *Shock Point* is an approachable book that will explain to you exactly why you are stressed out and what you can do about it. It highlights the fact that the central aspects of stress can be addressed through a greater understanding of your individual stressors, blind spots, and habitual patterns. After all, an inability to recognize and reduce stress,

particularly when it gets to the point of burnout, is really a problem that stems from a lack of self-awareness and an inability to consciously recognize and change one's self-destructive habits. Very often these habits are related to working too much or not knowing how to cope with anxiety. And the reasons for working excessively and not dealing well with anxieties tend to be related to personality type—and the often unconscious adaptive strategies that define the personality.

By summarizing and integrating different strands of thinking about stress with the Enneagram map, Chad provides much-needed pathways for dealing with the stresses that affect us in ways that can be seen to be individual, according to your specific personality type. What stresses you out may not stress out your partner or your friend. And the ways you automatically cope with stress may contribute to increasing your stress. By bringing together theory and data about the nature of stress itself with the Enneagram types, this book provides a useful approach to dealing with the pressures of life and work in a way that is tailored for people based on their specific stressors and inadequate coping mechanisms.

In doing this, Chad has done a good job of meeting the moment—showing how we can use the Enneagram's age-old wisdom to do a better job of coping with all the modern pressures our 21st-century, technological world imposes on us. *Shock Point* helps us see the way we fall asleep to ourselves and the activity of our everyday lives in a way that can endanger our health and threaten our very existence. And it shows how understanding our personalities can help us increase our chances of becoming conscious enough to avoid devolving into mindless, perpetually overwhelmed automatons.

We've had the great pleasure of having Chad and his lovely wife and business partner, Shelley, in our professional Enneagram courses. Between them, they bring a diverse range of experience to working with the Enneagram through their Big Self School and coaching practice. This book supports the good work they do by clarifying the intersection of burnout and the Enneagram system so that hard-working professionals have a substantive guide to performing well and accomplishing things in life without losing themselves in the process.

By explaining the ways we can get burned out by overdoing the biases and propensities embedded in our personalities, Chad helps people understand the choices and patterns of behavior that can get us into trouble—and the things to know about ourselves that can

help us cultivate a more conscious and intentional capacity for self-care and self-support. In writing this book, he has provided something that many people need in a way that perhaps we humans never have before—a way to see what stress is, what generates it, and what it does to us if we don't apply ourselves to our own path of inner growth.

If you are in danger of overdoing, overworking, or overperforming, this threat may be related to some hard-to-change features of your personality as well as your external life circumstances. If this is the case, you owe it to yourself to read the material in this book carefully—as you will likely find real answers to your problems in these pages.

As the most powerful tool available to help humankind wake up at a time when we desperately need to awaken, the Enneagram provides a sense-making framework for addressing the causes of our individual and collective stress and anxiety. Some students of the Enneagram system believe it has emerged in the last fifty years in the West after being transmitted in secret for many centuries because we need it now as a means of transformation if we are to survive. This book would seem to support that idea. Becoming more conscious of our habitual ways of wearing ourselves down may be the only way to truly address the physiological and psychological warning signs of stress we continue to ignore at our peril.

— BEATRICE CHESTNUT AND URANIO PAES

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