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## George Gurdjieff

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**George Gurdjieff** (1866 – 1949) was a spiritual teacher who transmitted his wisdom not only through words, but also through music and spiritual dance. His teachings are found in the books of **P. D. Ouspensky** (1) and **Thomas, Olga de Hartmann** (2).

Gurdjieff's father was a bard who travelled in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus telling stories and singing mystic songs, in accordance with the **Ashik** tradition (3). Being influenced by his father, Gurdjieff developed a method for awakening one's consciousness. He called his method **The Work** or **The Forth Way**, where he addresses the question of people's place in the world and how to focus attention and increase self-energy. Gurdjieff claimed that people ordinarily live in states of *waking sleep* and react with *mechanistic reactions*. He claimed that: "Humans are machines and machines can only react mechanistically." He therefore, found out that all humans can be categorized within nine character types. These types are organized symbolically around a circle divided into 9 equal segments. The symbolic figure is called **Enneagram**, from the Greek word *ennea*, meaning "nine". Below we see the enneagram and the nine essential character types.



Type	Essential	Basic Values
1	Reformer	Goodness, Integrity, Balance
2	Helper	Love, Pride, Empathy
3	Achiever	Result, Support, Vanity
4	Individualist	Egotistic, Identity, Importance
5	Investigator	Inquisitive, Interrogator
6	Loyalist	Principles, Belief, Order
7	Enthusiast	Achievement, Satisfaction
8	Challenger	Reality, Causality, Protection
9	Peacemaker	Peace, Love, Bliss

Out of these nine types, three of them are the most prevalent and widespread among people. These are the types 3, 6 and 9 (Achiever, Loyalist and Peacemaker) which occupy the corners of an equilateral triangle. Type 9, the Peacemaker, is accepted to be the most valuable type and therefore is located at the top of the Enneagram symbol. Each basic character is connected to its neighboring characters, which appear as secondary characteristics. For example, the Peacemaker has also the characteristics of a Challenger and a Reformer. The three main types have the following characteristics:

**The Achiever:** Is a pragmatic thinker and is mainly interested in practical results. He/she wants to support and help people but indulges in self-importance. He/she can feel empathy and love towards others but also wants to be loved and be venerated. Most self-made-man and successful businessman/businesswoman are achievers.

**The Loyalist:** Is an individual who holds strong principles and abides to social order. He/she adheres to religion and believes that the universe is an ordered and lawful organization. Such people prefer to work in areas related to law and social order. Their secondary character is to be enthusiastic about their investigation. But this enthusiasm can be intrusive and disturbing.

**The Peacemaker:** Is an idealistic in search of external peace and internal bliss. He/she strives for balance and peace in the world and in the nearby vicinity. Beauty, harmony and goodness are important values around which their lives revolve. People interested in wisdom, esoteric knowledge and arts do generally belong to this category.

Gurdjieff claimed that all humans are sleepwalkers. He said that without the help of an awakened person one cannot escape the prison of self-importance. In his own words:

**Without struggle, no progress and no result can be achieved. A man can only attain self-awareness with the help of those who possess it. This must be understood from the very beginning. One must learn from him who knows. Awakening is possible only for those who seek it and want it, for those who are ready to struggle with themselves and work on themselves for a very long time and very persistently.**

In order to wake up and to be self-aware one has to reach three levels or states of wakeful awareness. These are: **The awareness of the body, the awareness of the mind and the awareness of the soul.** In order to enhance the awareness of the body he invented the "Stop game".

In this game the teacher calls out "**Stop**" at a moment when the students are occupied in an activity and everyone had to freeze like a statue. The posture is to be held until the teacher says "**Go**". This game is still practiced among the children of Anatolia. As the muscles of the body start to ache, the student reaches the first level of self-awareness.

#### **References:**

- (1) **In Search of the Miraculous**, P. D. Ouspensky, Harvest Books, Fort Washington, 2001, USA.
- (2) **Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff**, Thomas and Olga Hartmann, Penguin Books, Arkana, 1992, London, England.
- (3) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashik>