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The Roaming Pen... It's Christmas - cracker time !

How can you get your name in lights the world over? Change your name to Emergency Exit!

Everyone's heard the other old joke about Christmas coming once a year and so do I, well I hope that's not true for you. Let's face it we all really like the 'Festive' season with all its needless expense and pretending to have 'fun'. I say pretending because I think that actually we do enjoy ourselves and there really is no harm, is there? By the way, who hides in the bakery at Christmas? A mince spy. As usual at this time of year I am happy to bring you news of all the many exciting festive events that you can go to in Brighton and once again, the answer is basically not a lot. You can go ice skating on the Royal Pavilion Lawns for a mere £11.00 an hour and the Brighton Centre for only £9.00 for 90 minutes. Hot prices for cool fun. (How do snowmen get around? they ride an icicle) I have hunted high and low for news of something local that's interesting and different to entertain us during the festive season, you guessed it, there's nothing. What do you call a penguin in the Sahara desert? Lost. By far the best annual event is the Burning of the Clocks on the 21st. This children's parade is a huge success, last year bad weather meant it had to be cancelled but this year they hope for 20,000 people, the traffic stops and there are candles and music everywhere. Highly recommended no matter what your age. Why was Santa's little helper feeling depressed? He had low elf-esteem. Our beloved Theatre Royal has, once again, cobbled together a panto, this year its Cinderella. Which will no

doubt bring lots of pleasure to children, as it's supposed to, but for adults? If last year's effort is anything to go by there will be few laughs and mainly embarrassment. The top price at the Royal is £26.00 a seat or you can go to the National Theatre in London and see Alan Ayckbourn's masterly Season's Greetings. A seriously entertaining look at the misery and high jinks of an average family Christmas. Not many people know that you can get the best seats at the National Theatre for just £10.00, through the Travel Scheme, its true and very visible on the National's website. So you have a choice for your Christmas show, four of you at the Royal in Brighton at a cost of £104.00 or for a total of £60.00 four of you could go to our greatest theatre and see a superb play with an all star West End cast. How do we arrive at that cost, easy, one Southern Daysave Group Ticket costs just £20.00 for all four people and £10.00 each for the seats. And you can certainly eat on the South Bank just as cheaply as you can in the middle of Brighton. What's big, grey and wears glass slippers? Cinderella. Talking about Kemp Town, last year I got into hot water for describing Rock Street as a dead zone, it was. But in less than 12 months all has changed, we have Chris and Gary wining and dining the beau monde in The Swan and just opposite The Rock Inn, one of the oldest watering houses in Brighton, built in 1750, has been given a new lease of life by cousins Josh and Ben. They have revamped this historic pub, into a comfortable and very friendly place; situated right behind Lewes

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Crescent it should attract a very interesting crowd. The boys are introducing many new features including a film night, poker league, even a book club and that old pub favourite - quiz night. The building is part of the history of Brighton it was a coaching house in the 18thC. The cellar has the original well and even more nicely decorated rooms. There is a patio for the smokers, featuring a fantastic mural by our local urban graffiti artist, Sean. Food of course will be on their agenda; Josh tells me that old fashioned pub grub will be on offer in due course. They plan to run a traditional pub with a twist, get it right and they will have more than a twist. Talking about food I should mention that by far the best Indian takeaway by miles is Khans of Kempton, just along the road. This little kitchen really is excellent, their home made nan is wonderful.

Rock Street is coming back and with The Dragon re-opening just along the road it is becoming almost a 'dining destination'. I'll leave you with my warmest wishes for Christmas and the news that B&H City Council's slogan for this year is Brighton and Ho ho Hove - oh dear. We welcome a new man at the controls of this proud organ, whilst we will miss the firm hand of the charming Sarah who has guided us through some interesting times we now have a new editor, Kenton. Welcome to the big chair - steady as she goes Captain.

Take it easy, have a good one and don't forget what disease can you catch from putting up too many Christmas decorations?
Tinsillitis. (sorry)

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Down the Rabbit Hole

Here's a simple question for you to ponder: Who are you?

Think about it for ten seconds or so and try to give a definitive answer. Some people may find this very easy. They are simply a 'Claire Palmer' or a 'cheerful, happy person' or a 'dad and editor who likes swimming'. Others will find it more difficult. They know that their name doesn't sum them up, neither does their occupation or even their personality. The more they think about this question, the less they know how to answer it.

Inscribed into the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi were the words 'Know Thyself'. Variations of this piece of advice are to be found in many different philosophies and religions. How many of us know how to follow it?

A decade ago, I began reading up on something that I have since found very useful in terms of 'knowing myself'. It is called the enneagram. Its origins are obscure but is generally known today as a 'personality typing system'. These words make a lot of people cringe because, quite rightly, they feel that people are hugely individual and complex and you can't just divide them neatly into types.

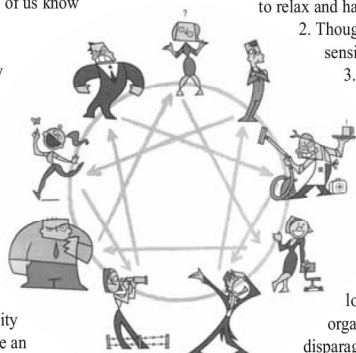
However, my view is that the personality is not the person - it is a construct, like an ego-armour you build as you grow up to deal with the world around you. This armour does seem to form in particular ways.

As an example, I discovered myself to have the habitual personality of a four. This means that when my personality was developing, I focused inwards rather than outwards and on my emotions rather than my thoughts or actions. My way of dealing with life was basically to retreat inside into a

daydreamy, emotionally charged inner world to find solace and sanctuary. Fortunately, I fortuitously developed emotional honesty, empathetic skills, creativity and a strong imagination. Unfortunately, I can also experience crippling self-consciousness, perpetual longing for a perfect life, hyper-sensitivity and moodiness. None of this is who I really am, they are just well-worn ways of dealing with life. The good thing is that by understanding my fixations and mind-patterns, I can become less attached to them and look beyond personality for an answer to, 'Who am I?'

There are nine types of personality that are created depending on where your focus of attention lies as you grow up. This is a very brief overview of them:

1. Works very hard and has strong principles but finds it hard to relax and have fun.
2. Thoughtful and generous but can be overly sensitive if good favours are not returned.
3. Charming and aims for success but can seem like they are wearing a mask.
4. Emotionally honest and introspective but can be overly self-conscious.
5. Wants to understand others and the world from a distance and can lack social skills.
6. Seeks safety in numbers by being loyal to friends, family and organisations but can be anxious and self-disparaging.
7. Extroverted and seeks constant novelty and enjoyment but can begin to experience life superficially.
8. A natural leader who is extremely confident but can be unnecessarily confrontational or intimidating.
9. Goes with the flow and avoids conflict at every opportunity, becoming affable and pleasant but ignoring their own needs.



Cherry Tree: Top tips to clean your oven

We all know that it makes sense to wipe the oven out after every use but having the time or the discipline to do this is another matter.

There are two options when cleaning a dirty oven. You can either use the natural method or the chemical approach. The natural method will take longer and will need some elbow grease but won't leave your kitchen full of nasty fumes and is better for people with respiratory problems. To clean a greasy oven spray the base of the cold oven with water, sprinkle on a thick layer of bicarbonate of soda and leave it to work over night.

Using a spatula or palette knife to scrape away the grease, dirt and baking soda. Rinse with plenty of warm water and your oven will be clean.

After you've finished cleaning your oven to it smelling fresh bake some orange peel on a baking tray or to get your whole home smelling festive simmer some orange peel and cloves on the hob.

**From Cherry Tree Housekeeping
For Kempton and beyond.
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Interested? Here are two main reasons that it could be useful to do further research:

- a) It helps you to shine a light on yourself and be better person, while also understanding the behaviour and motivations of those around you.
- b) It's great fun to spot enneagram types, whether in the supermarket queue, during your family get-togethers, or when watching a film. The character of Donnie Darko is a good example of a four, but Miss Piggy is sevenish, through and through.

Continue down the rabbit hole at www.joshuafrench.info