

## Lesson 47: Getting Reacquainted With Yourself

Life is an odyssey; it is a journey of internal and external discovery that requires a balance between the demands of physical life and a spiritual calling from within. But in the course of life we often find ourselves faced with many imbalances, one of which is our ego-identity structure. While we do possess an array of personality traits from which we express our individuality we are often of the belief that we are marked by what appears to be certain indelible personality traits and we come to accept these traits at face value. However, it is important to understand that our personalities are not etched in stone but that they are shaped, molded and remolded in response to external influences; the result is that we often become a product of our environment. These influences, whether positive or negative, are important facts to take into consideration because they form the basis of our ego-identity structure which will ultimately contribute to either having desirable or undesirable life experiences. The lesson this week will take you on a journey through the formation of the altered-ego identity structure so that you can better understand this aspect of the nature of your reality. It is anticipated that by the time we reach the close of the lesson that you might have cause to get reacquainted with yourself if this lesson speaks to you in this manner.

Our ego-identities structures are formed early in life and are influenced throughout the course of our lives, sometimes by our own choices and sometimes by the acceptance of the standards and beliefs of others in our environment. During infancy it is our mothers or other caretakers who initially start to shape and mold our ego-identity structures and who then set the stage for what becomes the basis of our core beliefs which will relate to how we will feel about ourselves and our environment. As we move through infancy our ego-identity structure continues to be molded by our families and later extends outward to embrace our cultural and religious environments. The manner in which our ego-identities are shaped and molded during childhood becomes of great importance to us because it affects the quality of our life experiences later as adults. It is this shaping and molding that we must examine if we are to ever get reacquainted with our true selves.

During infancy and childhood certain innate behaviors, activities and tendencies are either accepted or rejected and will either be valued or negatively devalued in accordance with the beliefs and standards of those in our environment. This includes our mothers or caretakers, our immediate family unit, aunts and uncles, grandparents, teachers and even our peers. Their preferences or dislikes are passed on to us in which case we will either consciously choose to accept them at face value or we will reject them. Because we desire the approval from those in our environment we typically accept their preferences and dislikes as an accepted fact, thus they become integrated into our core belief structures. When we choose to accept these external assessments of our personalities they in turn will affect our ego-identity throughout the course of our lives or at least until something occurs along the way that affords us an opportunity to

become aware that our innate attributes are a vital part of the whole of our being. The person we become vs the person we were supposed to become is a very important matter of concern to us because it affects how we will or will not express our individuality and will directly affect many of the choices and decisions we will make throughout the journey of our lives. Thus we owe it to ourselves to discover what innate attributes lie dormant beneath the surface of our conscious awareness that has prevented us from reaching our full potential. The facilitation of a normal and healthy developing ego-identity rests largely on the reflection of behaviors, activities and abilities that actually “fit” our persona, that is, the roles in life we choose to integrate into our reality that truly represents who we are and not who we were forced to become or have chosen to become by way of egoism which is an attitude of self-interest. Typically a well developed personality can adapt too many different roles in the course of life. But when those roles disconnect us from our true selves and bring about a sense of feeling lost, thereby creating an identity crisis, there is something going on beneath the surface that is not healthy to our overall development and should be examined at close range.

When our innate behaviors, activities and tendencies are rejected they do not just vanish from our being but rather they remain with us as an altered version of our ego-identity that exists just below the surface of our conscious awareness. Basically two psychological events occur simultaneously: one is that our own ego-identity structure is altered by the outright rejection of our innate attributes and the second is that our alter-ego falls into what the famous Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung called the “shadow” of our conscious awareness. The shadow is a metaphor for that part of our personality that has not been allowed to develop properly. The rejected traits of our personality become what we think of as the dark side of our personality and will externally manifest in the most unpleasant ways. This metaphoric shadow can have some serious implications because the negative effects usually go undetected, thus we have no conscious awareness that something is wreaking havoc from within. The part of our ego-identity that was not allowed to develop properly continues to carry its identity within us regardless of the fact that it has been rejected and deemed unacceptable. The tell-tale signs of a suppressed ego-identity structure are repression, projection, identification, fantasy, rationalization and reaction formation. Each of these contains some form of a skewed internal or external perception of who we think we are and how we relate to others and to our environment which is as follows:

Repression – takes place when we suppress, for example, unpleasant or painful childhood memories or forbidden wishes. Forbidden wishes are the result of the devaluation of certain innate tendencies, abilities or desires that we were forbidden to express during childhood that carries over as an adult and that later becomes emotional baggage. Forbidden wishes can also have a negative sexual orientation that is expressive of repressed emotional needs turned outward.

Projection - takes place when the perception of the outer world is the reflection of the contents of the shadow. For example, some people are prone to believing that others are taking advantage of them or are out to get them even though this is not the case.

Identification – takes place when a person is perceived to have desirable attributes such as power, status or unusual ability. The result is that you see yourself as having the same qualities and believe you can attain this same status naturally. This unrealistic perception is very prevalent in reality shows such as American Idol where a contestant really believes he or she can sing as well or better than the contestants who are actually talented when in fact they have no singing talent at all but honestly believe they do.

Fantasy – takes place when imagined successes or accomplishments are not presently obtainable in a person's day to day living experience because they have not positioned themselves for such a status but believe they can acquire it without the same effort. From a quantum perspective this is a perception that does not align with a higher thought energy frequency that is required to bring something of this magnitude into a personal reality. It also applies to parents who live out their dreams vicariously through the accomplishments of their offspring just as it applies to employees who live their dreams of accomplishment through the experiences of their superiors.

Rationalization – takes place when we formulate rational-sounding reasons or excuses for our behaviors. A rationalization typically has little if no basis in reality but nonetheless can be made to appear as if it were legitimate and acceptable.

Reaction formation – is basically a defense mechanism we employ in lieu of manifesting repressed internal desires that we know are unhealthy or unacceptable either by our own standards or by the standards of others. Examples would be in relation to diet, drugs and alcohol or a forbidden sexual wish.

The personal traits that were suppressed in childhood were very important to our overall growth and development. The absence of them contributes to a dysfunctional adult life experience in some manner of speaking and ultimately takes its psychological toll on us in ways we are not even aware of such as the descriptions listed above. In order to cope with these internal imbalances we tend to look for external fixes, however, the fixes we generally attempt to integrate into our realities is not the least bit productive and ultimately does more harm than good. We are then inclined to blame ourselves or others for the misfortunes we experience throughout the course of our lives. While the split aspect of our personality lingers within us, the manifestation of this internal imbalance is evidenced in external behaviors such as sexual aggression, anger outbursts, envy and jealousy, and of course, the inability to reach our full potential. We look to our relationships with an unrealistic attitude of expectations in that we expect others to fill our emotional voids but because no one person can ever fulfill these voids it leaves us feeling empty and alone in our inner and outer world. Consequently we move

through a series of co-dependent relationships in an ongoing attempt to find a measure of emotional fulfillment that ultimately becomes a vicious cycle of failed and broken relationships that we seldom hold ourselves accountable for.

The alter-ego is always demanding its recognition and will make its presence known either in desirable or undesirable forms of expression. These forms of expression are often experienced in the dream state where the psyche will portray suppressed tendencies in an array of symbolic and archetypal images. Another form of external expression is in the act of expression itself such as in imaginative artistic productions. For example many artistic renditions speak volumes about the internal mental, emotional or even spiritual warfare that is taking place within the psyche of an artist whether on canvas or on a movie screen. These suppressed tendencies are also represented in the novels of certain authors whose characters are the epitome of their very own altered-egos. Without a doubt suppressed tendencies are very evident in comic books and video games in which there is an alter-ego like character that is always embattled with someone or something in its environment.

On the flip side of the coin is the fact that the suppression of certain innate ego-identity structures can and often do act as an unseen and undetected motivator. The altered-ego can force you right out of your comfort zone and challenge you to extend and broaden your horizons as it seeks to externally manifest itself. This attempt to externally manifest when recognized and integrated brings you to higher states of awareness in which you will eventually connect to your true self. The result is that you will individuate as a whole being and consequently develop your potential in some manner of speaking.

When you become aware of what is going on internally you can begin to integrate suppressed personality traits. The integration experience is typically described as feeling like you have been given a new lease on life and is often described as a spiritual upgrade. Although the overall experience can feel like a new lease on life, in actuality it is really the ego that is being permitted to individuate as a whole; to become what you were intended to become which is truly a spiritual upgrade. However, the integration of these suppressed attributes also requires performing damage control in order to eliminate any associated negative learned behaviors that previously took precedence while you were disconnected from your true identity and were functioning outside of your true self. When suppressed attributes surface they appear to be latent personality traits such as certain talents, skills and abilities. As these attributes begin to surface they have to be slowly integrated into the fabric of your day to day living. There is also a release of stored energy that was needed for the development of those attributes had they developed properly. The sudden surge of this stored energy can be an overwhelming experience. It is as if a switch was turned on within you and you

suddenly find yourself traveling along a new path of life where many things look and feel very different than they did previously.

The process of individuation is not a one size fits all but rather it is the progressive unfolding of the ego-identity structure that is unique to every individual and that ultimately requires the proper development of innate behaviors, activities and tendencies. We simply cannot develop our individuality if we are not aware of what is holding us back from reaching our full potential. When we consciously seek to develop our innate attributes, regardless of negative external influences, many new doors of opportunity open up wide. More importantly is that it is not so much about what we accomplish or achieve but is more about being true to ourselves, when our pursuits are a natural fit. The successes and accomplishments that follow are the icing on the cake because they are driven by truthfulness and are not egotistically motivated, thus they are the most rewarding and satisfying experiences. Sometimes the suppression of our innate attributes can force us to identify with a collective mentality that is not our own individual mentality but is one that is learned and becomes an accepted mentality. On the surface the results may be appealing, however, there remains within us an internal yearning to be true to ourselves, to individuate and become who each of us were meant to become. When we are in harmony with ourselves as individuals we will also be in harmony with our environment. When we are forced by negative external influences to take on roles that are not ours to take on, that are not a natural fit, we do not grow and develop adequately on the mental, emotional and spiritual planes through the stages of life. In many cases we regress or just never grow beyond an earlier stage where we remain stuck in a psychological and spiritual rut from taking on an identity that was forced upon us or accepted by us because it was expected or was what we egotistically desired. Knowing what our roles are in life that reflects the truthfulness of our individuality is a blessing not only to us but to society as a whole.

In closing we sincerely hope that in bringing the formation of an alter-ego identity structure to your attention that you are able to find where you became disconnected from your true self and that you will make the effort to get reacquainted with yourself. As always should you have any questions, comments or experiences to share please feel free to do so.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We

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**Recommended Reading:**

Jungian Dream Interpretation, A Handbook of Theory and Practice by James A. Hall, M.D.

The Human Odyssey, Navigating the Twelve Stages of Life by Thomas Armstrong, PhD.

The Nature of Personal Reality, A Seth Book, by Jane Roberts.