

## Lesson 78: The Path to Cognitive, Emotional and Spiritual Maturity

### Series Two: Knowing Your True Self

Very few people really know their true selves, especially in these times when life is generally lived in the fast lane, where the unimportant matters of life are quickly accessed as if they are on speed dial and the really important matters of life are cast aside as nuisances or inconveniences, shoved in the back of the dark confines in the closet of the mind. With all the day to day matters of life swirling all about you, where is there time and space to get to know your true self, and even more so, why is getting to know your true self all that important anyway, especially when the many matters of physical life can be fast forwarded or altogether eliminated, as if they did not exist. But there has always been and still are very stiff mental, emotional, spiritual and even physical prices being paid for not knowing your true self. The further you move through the stages of your life, growing more and more out of touch with yourself, the more detrimental the loss of your true self becomes, as it continues to negatively affect the nature of your own personal reality. The discussion in this second series will focus on why it is vital to your well-being that you not only become reacquainted with yourself, but that you are reintroduced to your true self, as there is a good probability that many of you out there may have lost touch with your true selves a long time ago, and therefore, need to be reintroduced to yourselves again. Not to mention there is the undesirable mental and emotional toll external conditioning takes on your identity that is so easily lost in the conditions of everyday life, which are very often difficult and challenging to say the least. Generalized aspects of these conditions will be addressed for the sake of not just bringing them to your awareness, but to help you view each of them through a different set of lenses, and from a more positive perspective.

The story is told time and time again about someone feeling lost and expressing the need “to go find themselves” because they are in an environment that is no longer conducive to being in touch with their true selves. The need to find yourself outside of your current environment, or even within it, takes on a deeper meaning than is ever realized. A fine line of truth exists between expressing the need to find yourself and how that need corresponds to the conditions within your current environment. Many people fall into this ditch of error in their thinking, believing and perceiving that the environment they are in has caused them to lose their identity; that someone other than themselves are the cause of their own displaced identity. This is a story that has two sides of the same coin, and unfortunately, neither side has a bold line of distinction, which makes it very difficult to adequately discern what is real and what is distorted, when it comes to how you view the conditions within your personal environment. Generally speaking, the need to escape from your environment does not imply a long term relief to your perceived problems, but usually ends up complicating matters, if for no other reason than the fact that when the escape is the result of avoidance, no good

can come from such futile attempts. Although you can be easily deceived into believing that your most immediate problem has been instantly alleviated, it is just a matter of time before the same unresolved issues, now buried within the confines of another environment, that most always proves to be equally non-conducive to really knowing yourself, will manifest itself in due time. The ability to make a clear distinction between these two sides of the coin will require a great deal of effort on your part, and a willingness to look beyond the surface, as what lies on the surface is not your real reality, but is an illusion of your reality; it is self-created, and is temporary in nature, therefore, it can be re-created more accurately, which in turn will restore your identity.

In looking beyond the surface there are many conditions, situations, circumstances and events that exist in your environment that can make you feel as though they are not at all conducive to your well-being, let alone to knowing your true self. But what is important about all these external, and even the internal influences, is to identify the role you are playing in the loss of your identity, which you can successfully accomplish right in the midst of your most current environment. The question to be asked is what is it about your environment that causes you to feel that you have lost your grip on the situation, and is consequently, causing you to lose your identity. Truthful answers can be so utterly difficult to find, because things are seldom what they appear to be on the surface, so the means to make a clear distinction between illusion and reality really does require a hefty dose of introspection and reflection. When such mental exercises are employed in an attitude of complete honesty, and a willingness to look within, as opposed to blaming someone or something, you shall indeed know the truth, and the truths that surface will set you free beyond anything you can imagine. And in addition to knowing the truth, you will also get a much better perspective of understanding what makes you tick at the most basic and essential level of your being – you get to know you on a deeper level. While this might be an easily answered question for some people, for others, invoking such insight can be a very disturbing mental and emotional exercise, and therefore, the question becomes a monumental challenge because it is nearly impossible to first see that there are trees in the forest, let alone to be able to see the forest for the trees, thus, it becomes nearly impossible to delineate where illusion begins and reality ends, consequently, denial is all too often the end result.

Given that you have a flight or fight built in instinct, the propensity for either flight or fight becomes magnified in such a way that one eventually gives way to the other. So what begins as a need to fight for your own identity in an environment that appears to be anything other than conducive to your own needs and desires, and even sometimes your very mental and emotional survival, eventually gives way to taking flight, when there is no more fight left in you. Although the option of taking flight appears to be a fitting solution to the situation, this is not generally the case, because when you act on this option in the form of exercising your free will, you are taking every unresolved personal issue with you, regardless of your method of escape, which then becomes your

mental and emotional baggage. You can be assured that this baggage goes everywhere with you, because it is figuratively chained to your ankle. And even though you may feel a sense of immediate relief, there is a knowing deep within you that the underlying issues that sent you running in the opposite direction are still unresolved. Your psyche then has the task of sending archetypal smoke signals into your conscious awareness as a means to get your undivided attention. However, the task of actually conveying the message in a discernible and intelligible manner is left to the stability of your ego and your will, which of course is questionable. Your ego and your will then determine if they can combine forces sufficient enough to clearly discern these issues; thus it is all too likely that neither your ego or your will have the ability to do a good enough job of discerning these truths, if you are not adequately mature: cognitively, emotionally and spiritually. So, eventually, you will have to come face to face with your unresolved issues one way or another, which is precisely why it is best that you begin processing this journey of your own self-discovery right in the midst of the environment you are currently in, rather than to rush straight away into another environment that could potentially be just as threatening and unstable, leaving you with that much more mental and emotional anguish to have to contend with. So although the flight instinct may, on the surface, appear to be a more desirable solution to your predicament, exercising such an option without having honestly taken a personal inventory of yourself, your own actions and reactions, can leave you caught in a trap of deception that can cost you much more than you are willing to pay.

On the other side of that same coin is the exercising of the fight instinct, which proves to be no better a solution to your predicament than taking flight, because what you are actually fighting for may not at all be connected to the loss of your identity, as much as it is an ongoing battle to control the prevailing conditions in your environment, which boils down to your attempts to control someone or something in your environment that you perceive is causing the condition to begin with. In such a case as this, any attempts to provide you with a list of examples for the purpose of describing all the possible conditions, situations, circumstances and events is indeed and exercise in futility, as these are all unique to your own personal experiences, as well as all those who share in your circle of life. No matter what role you play in a relationship, and in whatever capacity those relationships exists in, everyone is in some way affecting each other's realities, but because of this mental and emotional "entanglement" the only reality you can potentially control is your own. You cannot control someone else by attempting to point out their flaws or by trying to control their behaviors or their activities. It is never your job to "fix" someone else, but it is always your job to fix yourself; and in this sense, there are very few people who are not in need of some degree of fixing at some point and time in their life, because everyone is subject to the human condition; which is rarely ever experienced objectively but is mostly experienced subjectively. If you find yourself in a relational boxing ring, be assured that you will not win the match, but that you will

lose – badly. And the reason why you will lose is because when you are caught up in the mental mindset that provokes you to fight as a means to control your environment, which of course, means that you also have to control the person or the thing in your environment that appears to be the cause of your dilemmas, you are actually losing your ability to be grounded to yourself. Instead, you become grounded to the very person or thing you are fighting against, and trying so hard to control. In so doing, your own identity ends up getting lost in the mental and emotional tug-o-war game that you simply are never going to win. Recovery programs, such as AA, NA, GA, etc., knows that desired changes do not come about by the persistence of an external force of pressure, but that change occurs in an environment where there are no axes to grind, no lectures to endure, and most definitely, no backing anyone into a corner. Such changes come about by your very own internal desire to change – period, no more, no less. Change on this level does not come about by feeling controlled, by fits of outrage or emotional outbursts or by any other means of control forced upon you or that you attempt to force on anyone else.

So, if life finds you in an environment that you need to control so that you can freely express your own needs and desires without being negatively affected by someone or something else, there are choices you will need to make, which right off the top is to relinquish the reins of control, lay down your boxing gloves and begin examining your own motives, your own needs and desires as an individual, separate from your existing conditions. When you turn your attention away from whatever it is that appears to be the cause of your unhappiness, your anxiety, your worries and on down the list, even your fears, and exert that same energy inward, amazing things begin to happen over time. However, be forewarned that these situations do not just magically change overnight; there are no magic wands, no potions, and no quick-fix formulas. If it hurts, it is probably going to hurt like hell for an indefinite period of time; if you have been worried and anxious, you will continue to worry and be anxious. But if you strive really hard to keep the focus of your attention turned inward, rather than projecting it outward more often than not, eventually the strife and turmoil will ease up. The reward is that you will come to know yourself, perhaps as the person you used to be or more likely as the person you have become, and are still becoming, as growth is never an overnight success story, but is an ongoing process. Like it or not, change takes time, and the conditions of life have a way of changing or altering who you are in many different respects. The road to becoming reacquainted with yourself is an on-going pursuit, but once you step onto the path of self-discovery, you cannot help but to eventually come to know your true self. Yet even along the path of self-discovery, there will be many a new experience that will contain certain lessons to be learned. Ultimately, it is in your best interest to stop long enough to learn each lesson as it presents itself to you, because if you skip over any lessons, they have a way of accumulating, karmically speaking, and

eventually you will have to learn them one way or another, so why make it harder on yourself.

And speaking of axes to grind, there are many unpleasant and often very difficult and unexpected situations, conditions, circumstances and events encountered in life that can grind away at your identity, if you allow them too. Due to the unpleasant influential or forceful nature of these difficulties, you can easily fall prey to becoming a victim and then hold that emotional position as if it were your true identity; taking it on as a mindset to the extent that it is no longer a perception, but becomes an actual on-going course of undesirable events in your life, which leaves you feeling victimized over and over again. The only real way to change this very destructive mindset is to cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually process and integrate the events that have occurred so that you see the role you played in attracting them into your reality; not excluding the need to understand why you respond to certain external influences, and how you habitually react to the memory of those events. Once you have accepted these events as having occurred in your reality, as painful as that might be, it is for the benefit of assuring your own peace of mind that you no longer see yourself as a victim or a victim of any circumstances, as this is a mindset, not a reality. In all cases, your reality is always a perfect reflection of what you think, what you feel, and what you hold to be true about yourself, and your environment, along with your perceptions. Your own personal philosophy will either enhance the quality of your life experiences, or it will negatively manifest in some form or fashion as just another undesirable current or future circumstance or event waiting to unfold in your reality. So rather than to risk your true identity for the sake of holding fast to a negative and very deceptive state of mind, that in turn is going to continue to create non-existent realities in your mind, that are then subject to the law of attraction and the law of manifestation, it is to your benefit to change your mental and emotional state of mind. This is accomplished by cognitively processing the situations, conditions, circumstances and events of your life from an entirely different perspective that is not founded on deceptive illusions.

Getting to know your true self can be a challenge without the unpleasant effect of any external influences. However, external influences are like a two-edged sword, because they can send you spiraling into a pit disparity, causing you to feel useless and worthless, or they can be seen as an opportunity for growth when they are not accepted at face value, but are accepted as a challenge and are considered an obstacle worth overcoming. So it is in these situations where the personal conditions of your life reflect back the exact measure of your belief in yourself, that in turn will directly affect the level of confidence and courage you need to establish your identity, and to really know yourself, and what you are capable of achieving as opposed to what you believe, think, feel or perceive you are capable of achieving. Seldom are these personal perspectives one and the same, but rather they are overlays that do not match; they are typically polar opposites and are often very contrary to one another, and sometimes are even

taken to extremes. So the business of knowing your true self becomes a matter that is subjectively experienced, rather than it being an objective experience, as such are the human conditions of physical life. When the business of knowing yourself falls into the uncertainty of subjectivity there is no end to the ways and means your identity can be lost or masked. Sometimes this masking occurs as a means to protect yourself from situations that are really out of your control, the likes of which are all too many times experienced in childhood. But even as adults, you may find yourself coping with very difficult situations that leave you feeling helpless and even hopeless, thus further masking your identity. Consequently, your true self is buried beneath the rubble of undesirable conditions that you are unable to control and should not be controlling. Again, the only person you can control is yourself, and this is a truth that is undeniable. You can indirectly control certain behaviors in others, but this should never be your sole motivation for changing yourself. Such external changes generally occur when you have made significant changes to yourself, to the extent that someone in your environment is affected or inspired by the visual change in you and in your reality, and who then seeks to effect significant change in themselves. Be assured that you will never affect change by force, whether in yourself or in anyone else.

Conditions in your environment can be sufficient enough to take their toll on you, in the sense that they can be significant enough to deplete your mental, emotional, spiritual and especially your physical energy, let alone to negatively affect your identity. Your true self can be easily lost in the debris of difficult conditions that require more of your undivided attention than is realistically possible for you to give without some aspect of yourself being put at risk. Something about you has to fall by the wayside in order to devote the time and energy to whatever is going on in your reality that is pressing down hard on you. But you must be very careful in weighing these matters out because if you perceive them to be something other than what they really are, you will fall prey to fabricating non-existent conditions, that in time will become a very unpleasant manifested reality, leaving you to suffer the undeniable consequences that may not just hurt you, but may inevitably hurt others in the process. To avoid such a detrimental situation from occurring or getting any worse than it already is, you should really consider the benefits of a time out, as time away from an unfavorable or even an ordinary condition of life, provides a moment for your weary mind to come to a halt for some much needed rest. It is in these quiet moments that you will find it beneficial to think about nothing and just enjoy the solitude. Sometimes these will be the moments when you will actually be able to see the forest for the trees. If you allow yourself to be guided in these instances, you will find the much needed solutions to your dilemmas, which always have a way of quietly seeping up into your conscious awareness, and often with little effort on your part, whether you are meditating or perhaps writing in your journal. You not only find the answers you so desperately need, but you suddenly find

your own identity, and this experience becomes a point of restoration where you feel reconnected to yourself, even if it is only in a small way.

However, there is much to be said about attempting to know your true self by means of avoidance. Running away or avoiding situations, conditions, circumstances and events by any method of escape will not bring you true peace of mind anymore than it will reconnect you to your true identity. You will not really come to know yourself, because whatever it was that you felt the need to run away from or avoid was ultimately not faced. Regardless of its nature or the source of it, that issue was not in your reality by accident, as there are no accidents in life, but rather it was there by intent, perhaps on a psychic level for you to experience. When such situations are intentionally avoided, the energy remains embedded in your psyche where it is still waiting to be experienced. So whatever it was you ran from or avoided, it will come back to haunt you, and perhaps with a vengeance sometime later on down the road of your life. The next go around is very likely to be that much more troublesome, simply because you did not deal with the issue when it was less of a problem. So if you find yourself immersed in difficulties that seem to be compounding, it is very likely that these are issues you may have already tried to escape from; obviously, it will not be in your best interest to avoid or run away from them any longer.

Doing so with the excuse of needing to find yourself or to protect your peace is only going to prolong the lessons still there to be learned. The fewer limits and expectations you place on yourself and the conditions already in your environment, the easier it will be to get through whatever it was that brought you to that place of discomfort in the first place. Even though certain situations or conditions have the appearance of feeling as though you are in the wrong place at the wrong time, and you need to get out as fast as you can, because you feel like you are being controlled or because you are unable to control the situation at hand, be assured that you are where you are because there is something within you that needs to be addressed, and the conditions that surround you are the perfect environment for this aspect of your personal growth to occur. It is not by chance that you are in the midst of a particular situation or condition in your environment such as it is, but that you are there by intention on some level, whether consciously or unconsciously. So it is right in the midst of an unpleasant situation or condition in your environment that you can determine why you are in such a predicament, and what lessons can be learned from the experience so that your peace can be restored, and so that your own mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical equilibrium can be rebalanced. And of course, above all, you will know your true self on a deeper level.

In closing, we hope that we have enabled you to better understand how the situations, conditions, circumstances and events in your personal environment can distort, hide or mask your true identity, but that you can come to know your true self in spite of these

undesirable experiences. It is our hope that you will devote some time and energy for the sake of examining this discussion as being worthwhile to your own personal cause. To further extend a means to help you to know yourself on a deeper level, we are providing a list of recommended reading material that coincides with the series as a whole. The list was compiled with the understanding, that in most cases, the loss of your identity, and the consequent inability to really know your true self, is often hidden beneath the layers of many unfavorable conditions, thus coming to terms with these conditions as they really are, and not as they are perceived, is far more beneficial and productive to really knowing your true self. As we proceed through the upcoming series, we encourage you to feel free to share your own experiences, thoughts, concerns or to ask questions.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z, and the Collective We

Recommended Reading:

Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Addition

Codependent No More by Melody Beattie

Codependents Guide to the Twelve Steps by Melody Beattie

Emotional Clearing by John Ruskan

Hands of Light by Barbara Ann Brennan