

Self and the Community of Selves

A MULTITUDE OF SELVES As already indicated, the self is not just one self — rather it is a whole community of selves. Before we can really get on with the business of forgiving ourselves and accepting ourselves, even in the Radical sense, we need to get more acquainted with those parts of us that, at various times, lay claim to being ‘the self.’

However, there is an important distinction that needs to be made immediately between the spiritual I AM Self and the Human Self that is ‘ME.’ These two are fundamentally different, though intimately connected.

a) The I AM Self

This is the self that is above all others and yet the one we are probably the least aware of. It is often called the ‘Observer’ because it is the one who observes the ‘I’ who is ‘ME.’ The I AM Self is my spiritual self, or my Higher Self. It might also be understood to be our soul essence.

Whatever we call it, it’s the self that is still connected to the Divine, or the All-That-Is. In that sense, it is not really an individual self at all, because in the World of Spirit we are all One, connected to everyone and everything else, including the Divine. It is also the one that knows the truth about there being no right or wrong, good or bad, and does not identify with the content or process of my life in the least. It simply observes and loves me, no matter what.

The I AM Self is the one people often refer to when they say “I AM a spiritual being having a human experience.” Actually, I prefer to say that we are spiritual beings having a spiritual experience in a human body, since that implies we can be self-conscious during the journey. It also implies that we are here for a purpose.

b) The Human Self That Is ME:

This is my Human Self which differentiates me from all other humans and shows up in the world as ‘ME’ in all my many disguises — i.e., all those archetypes and subpersonalities previously mentioned. It is the self that my I AM Self observes and supports. It is the self that totally feels the pain of separation involved in being a spiritual being in a human body and yet is willing to go through it for the growth potential it affords. This self contains and encompasses many ‘selves,’ including the following:

i) **MY AUTHENTIC HUMAN SELF**

- ii) **My Authentic Human Self:** This is the self that expresses my natural beingness as a human being. It is who I am at my core — my basic character — my genetically determined disposition and way of being — both good and bad. It's my core personality. Assuming that I do not become dramatically altered by traumatic experiences or experience woundings severe enough in early life to cause splitting myself into sub-personalities, I will be more or less this same person all my life.

IDEAL SELF:

My Ideal Self: This is the self I would really like to be. Whereas my inferred self was a perceived self, this is a fantasy self. Who I model myself on is often an indication of my ideal self. Film stars, sports personalities, statesmen, media people like Oprah and so on, are examples of people I might model myself on. This is usually quite harmless and, in our youth anyway, serves to help us develop our sense of identity. However, once again, it is a question of congruency. If your fantasy is one that acts to pull you more towards your real self, or gives you something to aim for that would be in alignment with your true self and your purpose, then it can be seen as a powerful force for self integration. On the other hand, should the gap between your ideal self and your true authentic self be too wide or the qualities of each be so totally different, that will create dissonance. That in turn will lead to confusion, disappointment and a profound dissatisfaction with self

INFERRED SELF:

My Inferred Self: The important distinction here is that, whereas the authentic self is real, the inferred self is a perceived self. Even so, it is a self that can have enormous influence over our lives.

My inferred self is a sense of self that is generated in my mind, based on the feedback I get from other people. As I observe how people react towards me, I say to myself:

“If that’s how they see me and treat me, I must be

While it is true that there are those who go off alone on extraordinary expeditions to discover from the inside who they are, most of us come to know ourselves through having others mirror back to us who they think we are.

For example, if people tend to avoid me all the time, I might begin to infer that I am not very likeable. If people tend to control me or push me around all the time, I might infer that I am not very strong, or am not much of a leader. If people want to be around me all the time and are constantly laughing at my jokes, I will infer that I must be quite amusing and fun to be around. If women tend to flirt with me and come on to me, I might infer that I am sexy.

SOCIALLY MODIFIED SELF:

My Socially Modified Self: This is the self who is NOT really me, but who I may have become in order to be accepted — the person others have wanted me to be. This is the socially constructed self I have become in order to fit in socially or within a family — even though it is not really me.

As members of any group, we agree to give up some aspects of self in order to conform to certain group norms and be accepted. Anyone who was brought up in a severely dysfunctional family is likely to have developed a highly modified self, formed as a way to survive. But it occurs at all levels of society as well: at school, church, in the media, etc. That's because we are all social animals and are willing to conform to group norms in order to be socially accepted.

But how much of my individual self-expression am I willing to give up in return for the comfort of being part of that group? Suppose I am drawn to be a member of a cult but have to conform to some very strict rules? Suppose I want to be a monk? Am I willing to modify who I am for that?

JUDGING SELF:

The Judging Self looks at everything we say or do and judges our “rightness” or “wrongness” pursuant on what it knows us to “really” be behind the curtain.

SABOTEUR SELF:

The Saboteur takes the information set forth by “The Judging Self” and puts in place whatever is necessary to stop us from moving beyond our “perceived” feelings about ourselves.

THE SELVES & FORGIVENESS

When we do traditional self-forgiveness we are appealing to the usual human self.

The Judge says “no” automatically

The Committee says “no.”

Ideal Self says “what would the people I hang out with say?”

Radical Self Forgiveness goes straight to the “I Am” self, which says “I love you no matter what—nothing you can do to stop me from loving you.” [This will get you some relief]

When you do a worksheet—a form of secular prayer

EXERCISE: Play “Naked”

After dancing for groups (or pre-set in 5’s)—get in groups—Elect Timekeeper—10 mins to do Who am I Worksheet

Do Worksheet in this order:

1. Authentic Self—Real me;
2. Lost Self and Socially Modified Self (together);
3. Inferred Self;
- 4.

Questions before completing “Lost Self & Socially Modified Self:

How many gave up things to be safe/secure? [That is an illusion—there is no place to be safe]

Who traded stuff for money? (Integrity, freedom, peace, self-esteem, etc.)

Who traded stuff for Status/Power? (Freedom, dreams, integrity, etc.)

Ask yourself: What was the cost? Was what I traded worth the cost?

NEXT: Inferred Self

THEN: Ideal and Judging Self

Puppy pile--Sharing

GUILT/SHAME LECTURE

Shame—Remorse over who you are or see yourself as being

Guilt—Remorse over things you have done [or not done that you should have done—it is about behavior.]

It is different from shame in that shame is remorse, not so much over what we have done, as it is about the kind of person we think we are.

There is a relationship between them in that our guilt over what we have done might cause us to feel bad about ourselves or ashamed of ourselves—but the distinction is useful to our healing

It aids us in distinguishing between self-forgiveness and self-acceptance

Self-forgiveness heals/releases guilt

Self-acceptance releases/heals shame

5 QUICK STEPS TO SELF-FORGIVENESS

1. Clearly state aloud what you blame yourself for or feel guilty about.
2. Openly and freely feel the feelings associated with it. Then say: "I accept my feelings, without judgment; my feelings reflect how I see this situation right now. I own my feelings and I love myself for having them."
3. In your heart, or directly, make amends to anyone you may have harmed by what has been done. Be willing to see that, from a spiritual perspective, nothing you did is either right or wrong; however, from the human perspective, it may be necessary to apologize.
4. Now consciously release the feelings in Step #2.
5. Finally, say: "I completely forgive myself and accept myself as a generous, creative and loving being. I unconditionally love and support myself, just the way I am, in all my power and magnificence."

Partially adapted from Radical Self-Forgiveness by Colin Tipping
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