

The Journey to True Self

It seems like we started in the womb but the reality is we go back for generations, as our ancestors had a profound effect on our parents, and so on us. We were also affected by our family, neighbors, community, culture, and others, especially in the early years. The spark of life within us also goes back to all life and creation from the beginning of time. This essential nature connects us to every person, life, and thing in the past, and through us to all creation in the future. The womb is at the center and core of the female body, and we were connected to it through the umbilical cord, but not to our heads, or even our hearts, but also to our center.

During this time in the womb we are not only connected to the feminine creative energy, but also to the infinite creative source and center, the Over-Soul, and Eternal ONE. No wonder we cry out when we are born and the cord is cut. Yet as we move out into the world we hopefully take but a short trip to the heart space in the arms of a loving mother and father. Gazing into their eyes it is months before we even realize the separation. Should we be fortunate and blessed enough we may never feel this deep bond of love broken as we move to lap, then floor, and then toddle off into the world.

Next we move to crib, daycare, and kindergarten as we start the slow march through school. Our minds are filled with math, science, English, and history, as we become enraptured with the thinking mind, knowledge, and information. If we are lucky we also educate the heart through more artistic endeavors such as music, dance, and spirituality. In the home we may be trained in relationships, work, finances, diet, exercise, and many other opportunities for growth and fulfillment. If we are fortunate, this leads to a basic trust in the world, and a sense of autonomy, purpose, competence, a strong identity, and intimacy. Should we receive these blessings the arc of our life can be stratospheric and reach for the stars.

But what of those less fortunate who due to illness, world events, or parental and family dysfunction did not receive the heart space and other connections necessary for a full and complete life? They instead learned mistrust, fear, shame and doubt, guilt, inferiority, identity confusion, and isolation. Yes, many missed out on the good things that could have been. They were left alone, ignored, and neglected, much like a withered plant that doesn't receive the rain sunshine, rain, and nutrition it needs to grow and thrive. Lost, alone, and unloved they wander through life without really living. The arc of their life takes a low trajectory and resonance.

And what of those who are wounded by parents, family or worldly disease, dysfunction, and insanity; the abused, blamed, shamed, and battered? Those who fight back find life to be a battle ground and war zone littered with wounds, pain, and suffering that can last a lifetime and impact all areas of life. Even peaceful or good times are darkened and colored by the traumatic stress, despair, and fear. Those unable to fight may run and hide physically or mentally through all manner of distractions and troubles.

These poor souls are prone to addictions to numb the pain and suffering and lose themselves in drugs, drinking, gambling, or less obvious vices such as compulsive work, entertainment, sports, and a myriad other distractions. Those unable to fight or run freeze in place, dissociate, and retreat into the isolation of their distractions, homes, and minds. These are also vulnerable to addictions to deal with the onslaught of neglect and abuse. These are the walking wounded and living dead who go through life on autopilot.

Whichever path we took it was too overwhelming to feel our pain, so our bodies and hearts froze up and hardened as we became walled off from our emotions, inner child, center and source, love and truth. The blaming, shaming, negative voices and beliefs internalized until we believed them to be true. This led to an inner voice of our own attacking us from within to discourage and criticize us relentlessly. If these false truths sunk in deeply enough we also believed this to be the truth and voice of our higher power condemning us.

We wanted to believe parents and others always had our best interests in mind and heart, but all too often this simply wasn't true. Due to the wounds and dysfunction they withstood, a well of anger, frustration, and confusion caused them to repeat the tragic cycle. They were "doing the best they could," but far less than we needed or deserved. Our deep desire to gain our caregivers love and attention may have led us to minimize or rationalize their actions, but attempts to please these them and explain away or trivialize their behavior did little to relieve the mental and emotional pain and scars we received, and instead made us feel guilty for their abuse.

We kept the ugly secrets, so as not to bring more pain and suffering upon them, or ourselves. It was only natural for us to think that since they were so big, powerful, and grown up that they could do no wrong, so we came to believe that we were the ones that were bad, wrong, and sick. However relevant others suffering may have been, it should not interfere with recognizing and validating the abuse and neglect we took on. Society also did not wish to look upon it's sickness, and so was very willing to ignore the signs and signals however ugly and obvious. As such the many facets of child abuse weren't even on the law books as crimes until 1964.

We believed the lies. To deal with this devastating soul loss and shattered self a false self arose to help us navigate life. It became our awful secret as we lived in denial of our true and glorious self. The dysfunctional rules of don't talk, don't trust, don't feel, and don't look, don't listen, don't heal cemented the dynamic into place. It seemed all hope was lost. And so it went on for years, decades, perhaps a lifetime. We did what we could to avoid further harm and rejection through coping and survival skills however dysfunctional, and tried to become what we thought others wanted us to be however codependent, subservient, or demeaning.

Running from pain and danger and after comfort and safety we are eventually exhausted and filled with despair. Deep inside we knew that we wanted more and deserved more, so we set out to repair the damage by either seeking the original persons or others who fit the dynamic. This happens mainly on an unconscious level, so we mistakenly pick the people least likely or able to respond to our quest. Trudging through our lives unknowingly playing out this pitiful drama we are doomed to repeat the cycle endlessly unless we find real help and healing and take our hero's journey. This is the first stage where we are stuck in the habitual repetitive cycle of unconscious dysfunction, sickness, and insanity of everyday life.

It's not all bad of course, as even the most sick and twisted people have things that can help be happy at times such as a pet, hobby, or simple pleasures like food and rest. The problem is when pleasures become unhealthy or addictive, or fade away into a focus on our pain and suffering. We needn't look far to find these troubled souls, as the news is filled with them, or they might live next door, or reside in our very own hearts. It is all too easy to feel alone and helpless, and perhaps we are if we stay alone and don't seek help. But there is hope, help, healing, and happiness on the other side of the hero's journey. +

The journey begins as we realize our comfort zone has become a prison, an all too familiar groove and grave. We may be forced to face our situation due to difficulties in life, hitting bottoms, or as the desire for a better life takes root and starts to grow. The call for change and healing becomes greater than the fear, resistance, and habitual tendency to remain stuck and suffering. Encouragement may come from many sources such as true family and friends, a good book, movie, or video, or a trip to a therapist or twelve step meeting.

The first steps of faith seem like stepping off into a great and dark chasm, and the many reasons to withdraw appear very convincing and attractive. We have been living in fear and denial for years, if not decades, and many around us, and perhaps most of all our closest family and friends would much rather we not question the status quo, or work to dismantle or destroy it. Our dissatisfaction with our situation brings theirs into question as well, so they may even fight our efforts to understand and heal ourselves with all they've got.

This resistance also comes from within from the voices of our past and the false self that arose to deal with the denial and lies we were told and came to believe. Personal obligations and habits, as well as feelings of fear and inadequacy often tie us to a comfort zone and life situation that seems impossible to alter. Despite our denial and dysfunction we may attain what appears to be great achievements and success in relationships, business, and other areas of life, yet coming from a false self and life we end up feeling empty and alone.

If we are fortunate a guide, mentor, or teacher appears. Often the assistance comes from a higher calling, law, truth, and power that knows our best and truest self, and yearns to realize and express it just as we do. Besides individual helpers, we may be fortunate enough to find a community of fellow travelers along this path of trials. From our willingness, surrender, and efforts, unforeseen relief and support arise and urge us on. The challenges and difficulties may become great as we become vulnerable to the hard truths we must face, yet we find we are greater.

The hard work and grief of facing our past dysfunction, missteps, and losses can feel overwhelming, but if we believe we are the right track we can keep moving forward. We find we aren't essentially defective, bad, or worthless, rather that the voice of blame, shame, and negativity is what was wrong. We also find it won't be fast, easy, or painless, but we are worth it. The ordeal of facing our false self and the structures we built to support it tells us we were just trying to survive a frightening and hostile environment, so we are completely worthy of forgiveness, caring, and love.

Our new found awareness and understanding fosters the clarity, courage, and compassion to at last treat ourselves with the kindness and warmth we missed and have been searching for. Over time we see just how hurt and wounded we were as a child and carried that over into adulthood. We discover the critical, neglectful, or otherwise abusive treatment we received also carried over onto our Higher Power. This can be a very difficult image to transform, but so very important as our connection to all the power, presence, wisdom, and love of the universe to which we are in truth intimately connected on every level except our mistaken thinking.

Is it possible to turn our wounded inner child, abusive inner voices, and Higher Power from our worst enemy into our best friend? Yes. If we forgive and accept them as they care, take care of them, and become their best friend they will do the same for us. This is the treasure, the victory and holy grail we have been searching for. The inner wonder child, loving inner parent and Higher Power are who we have needed most from day one. They have been with us all along, still as precious and brilliant as a diamond however deeply buried in bullshit. All are a part of us, together again, and realized in our renewed and True Self. Whole and at home within, we now must return to share the glory of this great gift.