

Who Are You? How do you recognize who you are and become free and true to yourself?

by Timothy ©

If you want to understand the thinking behind a building's design, the best person to ask is obviously the architect, the one who designed the building. Likewise, if you want to unlock the infinite variety of secrets hidden within your own intricately designed human body temple, you must also ask the designer – the Creative Source of Life. In both cases, the definition of the edifice's purpose and function is determined by its source.

Therefore, it stands to reason that finding out who you are requires a very different type of investigation than simply considering what types of skills and personality traits you have. All human skills and traits are merely behavior patterns that we have internalized to help us function in the physical realm. These aspects of you certainly reflect who you are, but **THEY ARE NOT YOU**. In fact, consider the language you are likely to hear some version of at a Christian funeral: "The Lord has taken the dearly departed home to a better place." If the deceased person's body happens to be lying in a casket in front of you at the time, the following contradiction arises: If we are our bodies, how can the body be here while the person who once inhabited it is gone?

No amount of detective work or scholarly investigation can yield an accurate answer to such a paradoxical question because your reflection always thinks of itself and its tangible surroundings as real, while it perceives its unmanifested potential as unreal. Truth be told, however, tangible matter is actually reflected Spirit, and since Spirit is the source of all creation, the Infinite Ocean of Unmanifested Potential is the Reality from

which everything springs. Practically speaking, this means human consciousness actually resides in the intangible ocean of existence, and is therefore projected into the world through the body temple in order to express (in matter) the intentions of the Creative Source.

As such, you can only discover the definition of who you are by opening a direct communication channel between your individualized mind and the origin of that urge to project Divine consciousness into matter through your biological form. Only the Designer of your temple can accurately define you; the reflected organism does not have enough facts or understanding to define itself. So the real question is how you can open a direct communication channel to receive a constant flow of divine guidance from your Source. The next section will clarify the most efficient approach you can use to gain the deepest possible sense of self-knowing.

Follow Yoda's Wisdom to Freedom

In the third Stars Wars episode, "Revenge of the Sith," Jedi Master Yoda advised a dangerously confused Anakin Skywalker to gain control of his turbulent emotions by "learn(ing) to let go of everything you fear to lose." Yoda knew exactly what he was talking about. He was keenly aware that discovering who you really are is the true and ultimate reward for letting go of whatever you think you know, as he was suggesting to Anakin. In fact, contrary to "conventional wisdom," learning to maintain constant communion with Spirit is a subtraction – not an addition – process. Adopting (adding) beliefs clouds your vision rather than clearing it because beliefs always force you to try

stuffing infinite perceptions into finite analytical containers. On the other hand, letting go of beliefs (subtraction) frees your awareness to follow the light-speed movement of Spirit's limitless awareness.

The principle behind this subtraction process is simple. By no longer investing your emotional energy in seeing your surroundings in a certain way, you give yourself permission to allow everyone and everything you meet to tell you their stories from their own unique perspectives. This practice dramatically deepens your understanding of any subject upon which you focus your attention. Furthermore, by releasing the fictional story of your life that you "write" daily and relaxing into a state of alert but passive awareness, you create an opening for Spirit Wisdom to enter your conscious mind and establish within you an active portal into your daily affairs. When you operate consistently in this heightened state of awareness, you naturally tune in to your purpose in each present moment.

Releasing beliefs is actually easier than it sounds. The key is practicing a human relations technique called Empathic Listening. You can develop a high level of empathic listening skill by practicing the technique in the following four stages:

1. Listen to the verbal and nonverbal messages sent by others.
2. Listen to the intent behind the sender's message.
3. Listen to what the sender does not say.
4. Listen to your own inner responses to what you're listening to.

Listen to the verbal and nonverbal messages sent by others

Simply stated, verbal messages are the words that you say. If you are familiar with the language system that a person is using to speak with you, then obviously you

know that you must listen to the verbal message in order to understand what that person is saying. You can't afford to stop there, though. You also need to give your full attention to a wide variety of nonverbal messages, such as paralanguage (vocal inflection), facial expression and eye contact, kinesics (body movement), proxemics (use of space), and artifacts (objects with which you surround yourself).

Above all, refrain from formulating rigid judgments about the meanings of people's messages. By simply paying attention to a wide variety of signals instead, and by keeping your curiosity active, you will enable yourself to learn whatever you need to know about others.

Listen to the intent behind the sender's message

While anyone can focus on a speaker's words and behaviors, accurately discovering the messenger's intent is much trickier. Intent is the impact(s) that the messenger is trying to have on you. Nobody communicates consciously without any purpose whatsoever. In other words, all consciously initiated efforts to communicate are designed to produce verbal, nonverbal, and/or action responses. For instance, even if you just say hello to me, your intent is to receive a greeting from me in response. Therefore, the operative question in reading intent is what does this person want me to think, say, or do in response to his or her message?

There are basically two ways to read another's intent. One way is to directly contemplate (telepathically) the others' thoughts. At this point in the development of our species, however, very few of us can actually function at this level with any real control.

Fortunately, then, the other way to read intent involves remembering to ask the following three “reading comprehension” questions:

- a. What is the messenger really trying to tell me?
- b. What perceived benefit is the messenger hoping to gain by telling me this? In other words, what feeling is the messenger looking forward to experiencing if I respond the way he or she wants?
- c. How does the messenger want me to respond to the message?

Asking these three questions consistently and persistently will help you avoid getting swept away in the other person’s emotional energy flow.

Listen to what the sender does not say

We started this empathic listening process completely on the surface by focusing simply on the message content itself. Then I told you to dive just below the surface to read the sender's intent. This third step will take you even deeper into the core of human interaction.

Listening to what the sender does not say means being aware of how the sender's preferences and biases influence the content and delivery of his or her message. In other words, what details does the sender leave out? For instance, if you are trying to sell your car or your home, you may mention some aspects of the item on sale that need to be repaired, but you are not likely to emphasize the frustration you have felt about any chronic problems that would probably drive most prospective buyers away.

This same principle applies to the messages that most of us send about practically everything because we identify with the stimuli we perceive in our surroundings. We assign value to things according to whether they bring us direct pleasure or pain, and then we try to influence others to like what we like and dislike what we do not. In this way, we try to "sell" our vision of life to others.

By paying careful attention to this characteristic in others, you will gain access to a storehouse of useful information by realizing that people want to share a sense of meaning with others. People want to feel connected, not isolated, and the way for us to feel connected is to share a common vision with others. Therefore, what you often leave out of your messages is what you believe will turn others away from you. Consider then that when you first meet someone who you find attractive, you do not tell them your most intimate secrets immediately because you do not want to overwhelm them and run them away from you without getting a chance to explore the possibilities of that relationship.

As we return to the practice of listening to what the sender does not say, you can focus clearly on trying to figure out what the sender left out of the message. Understanding the sender's intent will help you tremendously in your inquiry into the missing information. If you know what others are after, then you can observe their strategies for accomplishing their goals. And any experienced negotiator knows that when we know another's intent as well as the strategy that he or she is using to carry it out, only then are we in an optimum position to neutralize the other's attempts to manipulate or attack us.

Listen to your own inner responses to what you're listening to

This last empathic listening step is truly the key that unlocks the portal to the freedom gained from releasing your beliefs. Listening to your own inner responses means simply paying close attention to thought and feeling response patterns triggered within you by another's message. Stand back as the witness and let the responding thoughts and feelings wash over you. But make sure to watch the whole picture as the energy currents of your thoughts and feelings collide with the messenger's thought and feeling currents. When your gaze is fixed on the dance of these energy streams rather than getting swept away in your own emotional tide, you will notice that clear visions of appropriate ways to respond to others' influence attempts suddenly appear on your mental screen. These suddenly appearing clear visions are what spiritual teachers normally define as flashes of intuitive insight or wisdom. This is the true wisdom that bubbles up from beyond the lake of thought. The more you practice cultivating and cherishing these wisdom insights, the more spontaneously and quickly your whole body/mind will be able to respond appropriately to the needs of whatever situations arise.

Listening to your inner responses enables you to resist the deceptive tricks played on you by your thought and feeling patterns. This step is the one during which you can starve your automatic impulses and therefore begin to weaken their influence on your self-image. The ultimate challenge is to fight through and endure the pain of meeting your own imperfections face to face.

Most of us are so afraid to see ugliness within ourselves that we refuse to allow ourselves to really look in the mirror. But you only have such a problem with your imperfections if you are busy judging the traits that you've labeled offensive. Due to your labeling, you then try to banish these qualities from the village of your self-image, only to be haunted by their lingering presence, which you actually nourish by building prison walls of suppression around them. Meanwhile, all of this denial and suppression involves a massive wasted investment of energy that you could be using to create what you really want. But nonetheless you may press on with your self-inflicted mind games.

If you were to step back for a moment, however, and try withholding any judgments about your natural need to awaken, and instead regard imperfections as awakening opportunities, what a release you'd feel from the prison of your own ego-blinded habits! You'd then be truly free to easily forgive yourself for having flaws, and your relationship to the human growth process would become mutually supportive in every conceivable way.

This in turn would help you see the same psychological movement operating within others, which would enable you to experience the spiritual benefits of forgiving them for their imperfections as well. Forgiveness that springs from this freedom state will safeguard you from the tremendous pain associated with blind trust, and will simultaneously free you from your ego's single-minded impulse to personally oversee the punishment of all human imperfections. Finally, observing your total self without fear lays the foundation for you to choose appropriate, timely responses to others' aggression because you are then grounded in total awareness, patience, and perseverance. This is the essence of knowing who you are and being true to your real self.