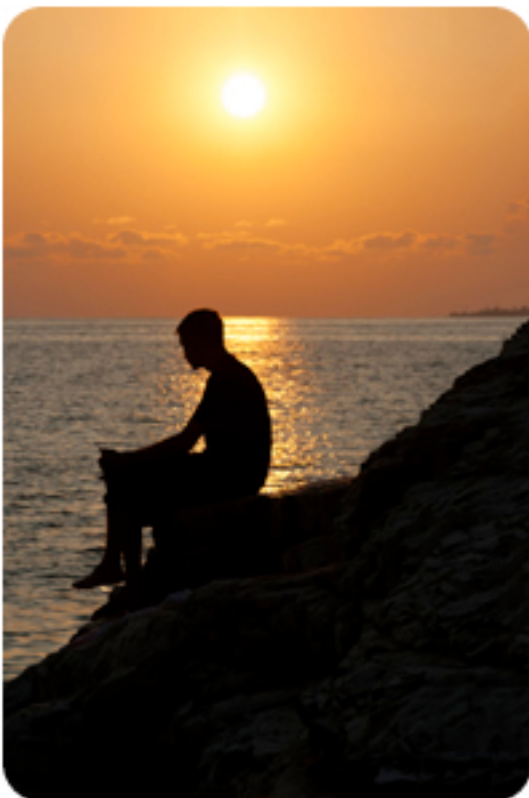




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Self awareness



What a huge, important and wonderful subject this is! It ranges from the daily, practical, moment-to-moment living in one's external world of activity, to the vast and expansive realms of activity and non-activity in the spaciousness of one's private, internal world.

Let's firstly take a look at "self image". Self image, logically, is the picture you hold of yourself: how you see yourself; who you think you are in the world; what you think you're capable of; how you feel about your family; where you grew up and the circumstances of your childhood; your life experiences; and, how you view your capacity for living a successful life. Your personal history and the way you perceive that history can have a huge effect on your self-image. The way you look physically is also an important factor in the area of self image. Is your body and your

"look" in alignment with society's impression of beauty? Are you beautiful enough? Are you handsome enough/thin enough/tall enough? Do you have the "right" colour

eyes / hair / skin? There are so many variables, all of which make a difference to the way you ultimately see yourself.

Self image directly influences your self esteem. If you don't think you "fit the mould" for any reason, be it reality or perception, that thinking will affect the way you feel about yourself. Self image and self esteem go hand in glove. Low self esteem can be detrimental to your mental, emotional and physical health. This type of negativity can result in anxiety, depression, fatigue and many other health conditions. It can also stop you from doing things you'd like to do, which tends to exacerbate the problem. Sometimes people fit all of society's criteria for beauty and still suffer with low self esteem, due to their past experiences. Personal history can have a monumental influence on the way you see yourself, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you view your talents, gifts, intelligence, competence and capabilities.

Your level of self esteem either supports you or hinders you

Can self image and self esteem be raised? It sure can!!! Everyone is born equal - maybe not in a worldly sense, but definitely in a human or 'soul' sense. A human being is a human being. All people will have their ups and downs, and everyone experiences birth and death and lives life with its endless experiences in between these two major events. There is a commonality with all people - we all think, feel, act and experience. We are no better and no less than each other.

A poor self image and low self esteem (self worth) may have been influenced by your life circumstances, but you are so much more than that. I think a low self image and low self esteem comes directly from a spiritual disconnection within the self. I suffered from a terrible self image and low self worth for many years and it held me back big time. It also caused me to make a lot of poor decisions. I went through my own transformation in this regard by developing myself in two different ways (and continue to do so). Since then I have trained thousands of other people in the same methods. The journey is worth it when you start to experience yourself differently. As you take steps to improve your self-image and self esteem, you will also experience an expansion in "self awareness" - a new, deeper and stronger sense of self can emerge.

Know Thy Self ... these words spoken by Jesus thousands of years ago are still so relevant. Once you know YOU at a deeper level, you can't help but fall in love with you ... and boy, oh boy, you just wait and see how life changes then!

Self Awareness ... is being conscious of what you're really thinking and feeling. You can watch, witness and observe yourself. You can be aware of your thoughts, and you can be aware of passing emotions and also how they're affecting your physical body. Self awareness is being consciously aware of yourself and your actions from a deeper place inside, an expanded and more present aspect of your being. It is a part of you that is neutral, peaceful, still, loving and just "there". It

does not judge you or anyone else. It is the true intelligent part of yourself - the aspect of you that knows who you are and why you're here. It loves you unconditionally and will guide you faithfully if you allow yourself to stop and be still. It requires physical, mental and emotional stillness and harmony from you that then enables an opening for its wisdom, knowledge, power and love to flow through and into you and your life.

This part of you knows all there is to know and it's there inside you right now, waiting for you to connect more fully with it. Once this aspect of yourself is allowed to open up and flow in and through you, your self love can automatically expand. It is through this connection that you can experience who you are and gain a deeper understanding of life itself. It can also bring a new appreciation for your own life and a greater love for humanity. How and where do you start to develop a greater self image, self esteem and self awareness? There are two main areas - external and internal.

EXTERNAL - There are so many things you can do to move yourself forward. I'll list some of them to start you off and then you add anything you can think of to this list. This is only a guide so be creative - anything goes. Step into one or more of the ideas on your list, even if there is an internal resistance to start with. The more you go with your commitment and override your emotional struggle, the easier it becomes.

Do something special for yourself every day - to show yourself that you value you i.e. take a bath, a walk, a coffee / tea in a beautiful coffee shop, read a book, sit still and do nothing, go to a movie, spend time with a friend, or have a massage. Give to you the way you know you would like to be given to.

Book into a group, a class or a course of some kind - something that develops and expands your knowledge and skills in any way you chose, or stimulates you and gives you a new experience. Even if you feel nervous or a bit fearful (everyone feels like that at some point) don't let that emotion lead you, just do it. It could be a dancing class, a meditation class, gym, yoga, karate, football, formal or informal study (on campus or on line), a writing class, art, book club, walking group, tennis, golf, zumba, language school, anything at all ... whatever rings your bell!

Be as present as possible in your daily actions - whatever you are doing in your daily life, whether it's washing dishes, playing golf, working on a computer, having a shower, sitting in a meeting - have the intention of being alert and present. Be aware of yourself and others around you. Listen well, and notice your own thoughts, emotions and actions. You'll be surprised what you notice about yourself. Don't judge yourself - just get to know the different selves residing inside you at a deeper level. Study and contemplate you. When you create a new action by trying something new, you expand as a person. This new consciously chosen behaviour will help support you and your growing self image and self-worth every

step of the way. It adds to you and you become more. Acknowledge yourself for even the smallest changes you make. The acknowledgement in itself brings a deeper level of personal awareness and amplifies your developing self.

INTERNAL - Getting to really know you at a deeper level means you have to look inside. This is an internal process, an inner journey. It's a bit like deep-sea diving, as you venture into the eternal ocean of your own being.

Take time to contemplate and ponder life, and who you are - really think deeply, reflect upon you and your life, and ask the deeper questions that need to be asked. There is so much to learn and know about yourself.

Learn to meditate and commit to sitting for at least 20 minutes each day - there are many forms of meditation, there is no right or wrong way, so just go with your gut feeling and chose one. A simple witnessing of your breath is a good way to start. Sit and watch or observe your breathing for 20 minutes. When your mind wanders (which it will), gently and calmly bring your attention back to your breathing. Gently expand your breath when it feels right. Breathe in and out through your nose at all times. Give it a go and expect to feel restless at first, but this will pass within a couple of weeks if you practise daily.

Believe it or not, sitting in meditation for 20 minutes once or twice a day every day will teach you a lot. You can learn an enormous amount about yourself, life and the universe by sitting in meditation on a regular daily basis. You may even begin to feel the invisible but very real connection you have with the whole fabric of life.

Self awareness will become more than it has been in the past, it will expand into a whole new dimension. Your self-image can change for the better, your self esteem can rise on a continual basis, and your self-love can deepen with a richness you've never known. You have the key to find more inner peace, inner security, inner stability and inner beauty ... and become as calm as a cucumber to boot (and aware of it!!)

Contributor

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