

The Human Condition

Human Beings

A human being is not a single entity; we are composed of several different yet fully integrated components. Each component (or body) is an independent consciousness yet they are all integrated and work in harmony, much like the different parts of a car all work together to get us from A to B. The Self is the driver (or at least it should be) and the mind, heart and body are components of the vehicle that carry us through life.

| Component | Perceptive (Yin) Side | Expressive (Yang) Side |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Self/Soul | Pure Awareness | Essential Qualities |
| Mind | Mental Perception | Cognitive Thinking |
| Heart | Emotional Perception | Emotional Expression |
| Body (physical & energy) | Sensory Perception | Physical Action/Will |

Figure 16: The Composition of a Human Being

Each component exists and operates on a different level (or dimension) of reality. Each element has perceptive (yin) qualities which allow us to perceive our environment, and expressive (yang) qualities which allow us to interact with our environment.

The three non-Self components (mind, heart and body) are not “us”, but they are aspects of our being. Because the various aspects of our being are so well integrated, it is very easy for us to become identified with them – which is what usually happens. This misidentification provides us with a lot of different opportunities for psychological and spiritual growth that we wouldn’t otherwise experience, but it also creates a lot of self-inflicted and unnecessary suffering.

The three non-Self components are highly programmable – once they have learnt a pattern of behaviour they tend to react automatically in similar situations. This is great because it allows us to carry out complex tasks without using all of our conscious attention, but it can encourage us to switch off and miss out on the fullness of life. It can be compared to a car that can learn to drive itself – it encourages the driver (Self) to fall asleep – which is what usually happens. We half open an eye when something major happens (like hitting a metaphorical tree), but most of the time we live our lives on autopilot and wonder why things don’t always go the way we would like.

This book is about awakening from the semi-conscious state that most of us live in most of the time, and the first step of the process is to look at the things that keep us “asleep” and the things that we do when we are “asleep”. The reason I am dedicating a whole chapter to these “negative” aspects of the human condition is so we can identify which ones affect us and understand how they adversely affect our lives. This not only helps us to know ourselves more fully, it also disempowers our subconscious patterns by bringing them into the light of our conscious awareness. This gives us a choice – we can allow them to keep happening or we can consciously stop doing them and free ourselves from a lot of unnecessary suffering.

The Personality

An average personality is a blend of authentic personality (the true-Self operating through the Mind, Heart & Body centres) and ego personality (the false-self operating through the ego structures). This is depicted graphically in Figure 17.

The Self’s field of consciousness (soul) operates freely and clearly through the authentic elements of the personality, allowing authentic expression of our true nature. But true nature is blocked and distorted by the egoic elements of the personality, resulting in inauthentic, reactive, childish, selfish and even evil behaviour. The proportion of authenticity we express is directly related to our level of awakening. The two-fold path is about dis-identifying from, disempowering and dissolving the ego personality, and associating

with the true-Self to develop the authentic personality. Note: I am not saying that the ego-personality is inauthentic, just that it isn't our true nature; it is our conditioning.

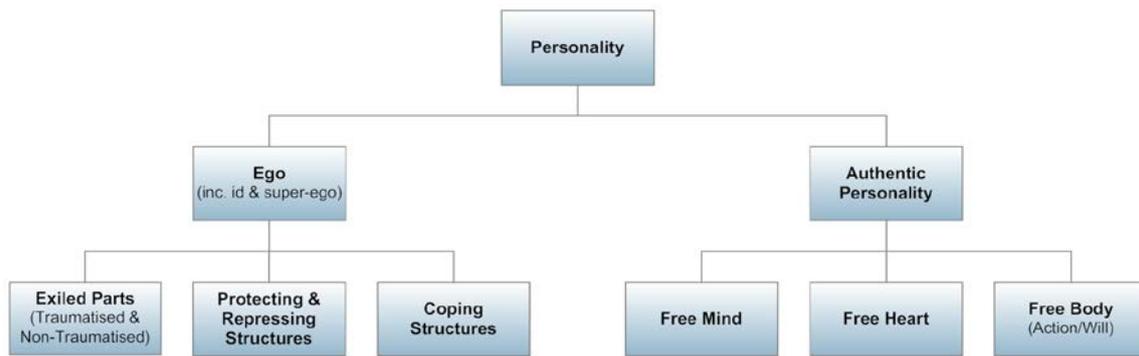


Figure 17: The Two Sides of the Personality

As we gradually dissolve our ego structures (through inner work), the balance of power shifts, allowing more of our authentic personality to be expressed. A great personality is not achieved by refining, polishing or re-programming our ego structures; it is achieved by dissolving them. Note: The personality does not disappear when we become Self-realised or attain enlightenment; it just becomes more authentic.

Imagine that ego structures are made out of ice. When the ice (ego structure) melts, the structure dissolves and the water (consciousness) is released and reintegrated into our authentic personality. The same applies to exiles, which are literally made out of "frozen" consciousness. When the warmth of our soul merges with an exiled part, the "frozen" consciousness is liberated and reintegrated into the wholeness of our being.

Sub-Personalities (or Parts)

We don't have one single ego personality – it is a system of many parts. In most people the system is reasonably well integrated, i.e. all the parts of the ego super-structure are connected together to form one integrated system. Even so, the individual ego structures within the super-structure can still think, feel and act independently from the whole. They are individual units AND they are part of a larger system – just as a finger is an individual unit, but it is also part of a larger system called a hand, and part of an even larger system called the body.

Individual ego structures (and localised clusters of ego structures) are sub-personalities or "parts" that combine to form our ego super-structure. They are called "parts" because we often say "part of me wants to do it and part of me doesn't".

Multiple or Split Personalities

The technical term for a split personality is Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). It was previously known as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD). People with this condition have created a number of distinct ego super-structures (sub-personalities) that are disconnected from each other. This prevents the intense pain and trauma that are held in each part from overwhelming the entire personality. Multiple personalities are our second line of psychological defence:

1. The first line of defence is the creation of separate sub-personalities (individual exiled parts and ego structures). These are sufficient to protect us from the mild to moderate psychological traumas that most of us experience in life.
2. The second line of defence is the creation of separate personalities (large constellations of exiled parts and ego structures). These are only required to protect us from severe traumas and persistent abuse.

The ego-self moves between the different personalities, utilising whichever one is most appropriate. Since each personality is utilised for a different aspect of life, it is not surprising that different personalities have very different traits. The treatment of multiple personalities is beyond the scope of this book, but the principles for reintegration are the same as for individual ego structures.

The Wounded “Inner Child”

The ego is largely “constructed” from innocent, immature, inexperienced and impressionable young consciousness, which is why we often behave like children when things don’t go our way. We try to give the impression that we are grown-up and mature, but that is just the outer layers of the ego that were added later in life; underneath the mature façade lies a wounded inner child. The inner child is not a single “entity”; it is a collective of many parts that formed over the course of several years in response to numerous confusing and distressing events. During inner work, it is very common to encounter (through inner vision or a felt sense) a young version of ourselves who is scared and confused. This inner child may be an individual part or it may be a cluster of inter-related parts:

- **Individual Parts:** Three different types of parts can present as an inner child. They are usually still at the age they were when they were originally created:
 - **Exiles** are pieces of scared, confused and distressed consciousness that were exiled (deeply repressed) to protect our ego-self from becoming overwhelmed. This is by far the most common type of wounded inner child that we are likely to encounter.
 - **Protective Ego Structures** are pieces of consciousness that were programmed to protect our ego-self from an exiled part by distracting our attention or “physically” preventing access. Distracting parts may present as a younger child having a tantrum, and protecting parts may present as a protective older child.
 - **Coping Ego Structures** are pieces of consciousness that were programmed to supplement the functionality of undeveloped personal qualities, caused by “lost” contact with our soul’s essential qualities. A coping structure will occasionally present as an inner child, but usually as a responsible and capable yet somewhat inflexible older child.
- **Cluster of Parts:** A cluster of related exiles or ego structures may present as an inner child. If they present as a single entity they must be treated as one and can often be healed as one.
- **The Collective:** The inner child is the collective consciousness of all the individual parts (inner children). Its age is the average age of all the individual parts. It cannot be healed as a whole because it contains countless un-related traumatised and programmed pieces of consciousness.

I have described the different types of inner children for reference purposes only. In practice we don’t always know which type we are dealing with and we don’t really need to know. Whether we are working with an individual part, a cluster or the collective, each inner child needs to be treated as an individual and needs to be treated with love, compassion, understanding and respect. The Talking to Parts Technique in Chapter 5 describes an effective method of healing and reintegrating wounded inner children.

The Repressed “Soul Child” or “Wonder Child”

In many ways a soul child is very similar to a wounded inner child, except that a soul child is not wounded; it is merely repressed.

When we were young (typically between the ages of 2 and 4), if one of our newly embodied personal qualities was ignored or not always well-received by our parents, we may have repressed it in order to maintain their love and approval (or keep ourselves safe). It is not possible to repress an entire personal quality because they permeate our entire field of personal consciousness, but it is possible to repress the part of our consciousness that most fully embodies (and therefore principally expresses) a particular personal quality. So that is what we did – The part of us that expressed a new personal quality was repressed if our parents didn’t acknowledge it (which made us believe that it was unimportant), or if our parents actively disliked it (which made us believe that it was unacceptable).

A soul child is basically a non-traumatised exile. It is a piece of our consciousness (which embodies an authentic personal quality) that is encased in an ego structure to repress that quality. The repressing ego structure is not just a containment structure; it is also programmed with the opposite quality to neutralise the effects of the authentic quality. If, for example, our playfulness was not encouraged we may have

encased it in seriousness, which would have caused us to be serious and sensible at times when we could have been playing and having fun.

We didn't always encase the unwanted part in the opposite ego quality; e.g. a playful part in seriousness, or a loving part in hatred. Sometimes our parents' misperceptions and misjudgements determined which ego quality we encased our unwanted part in. In such instances, we encased it in the opposite of what our parents perceived. For example: If they misperceived our openness as weakness, we may have encased it in false strength. If they misperceived our tranquillity as laziness, we may have encased it in striving. If they misperceived our tenderness as neediness, we may have encased it in boisterousness.

No matter what an authentic personal quality is encased in, it can never be completely contained; some of its energy will always seep out and influence our personality. However, the repressed personal quality will be tainted by its own frustration at being repressed, and it will be distorted by the ego structure that encases it. So our repressed playful nature will be distorted by its own frustration and by the seriousness that encases it, resulting in spiteful undertones.

If we grow up in a repressed environment (e.g. due to an overbearing parent) many of our authentic personal qualities will be repressed in this way, and lots of repressed parts equals lots of repressed frustration. The repressed frustration continually seeps out and adversely affects our personality, resulting in some or all of the following underlying issues: irritability, impatience, restlessness, general unease, anxiety, insomnia, boredom, discontent, etc. In addition to these underlying issues, the repressed frustration will occasionally erupt as an angry outburst.

Incidentally, you may be wondering why a repressed part of our personal consciousness (that is composed of mind, heart and body consciousness) is called a soul child or a wonder child? The unwanted personal quality was still emerging (i.e. being transposed from the soul to the personality) at the time the part was repressed. This means the soul was intimately merged with the part when it was repressed. So a soul child is a wondrous blend of radiant soul consciousness and innocent child-like personal consciousness, hence the term soul child.

We don't know that we are dealing with a soul child until we make intimate contact with it. Our initial contact is with the encasing ego structure, so we feel its false quality (e.g. hatred or seriousness). It is only when we feel deeply into the false quality that we discover the wonderfully radiant soul child in the centre. The Soul Child Reintegration Technique in Chapter 5 describes an effective method of liberating and reintegrating repressed soul children.