



Your Fabricated Personality

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Highs

Enlightened people live close to their weakness, while those with unflagging strength are often dull minded. Why is this? Is enlightenment a weakness and stupidity a strength? I think it's evolution.

Our personality is not a deep and personal thing, it's just the general program we apply to solve practical problems. Our notion of what's practical is part of the difficulty. We don't develop deep personalities because we don't recognize the importance of deep problems. To put it more realistically, we don't recognize deep problems as important because other people don't. This general lack of recognition and conversation keeps even the statement of these problems out of our language. We are not rewarded for solving deep problems, hence our personalities remain shallow. That's where the rewards are.

The only way you'll be rewarded for developing a better strain of carrots is if the society as a whole understands the need, supports the effort, and rewards the many intermediate steps. Otherwise, you're better off just planting carrots. The same goes for philosophical discussions versus profitable scheming. Enlightenment is a collective phenomena.

The other difficulty working against greater insight is the structure of your mind. Our minds cannot hold many different things in view at once. In particular, we find it difficult to hold conflicting views simultaneously. But we must do this if we're going to figure anything out because insight is the resolution of conflict. The most insightful people are the ones who are productive in arguing, and if they don't argue with each other, they argue with themselves.

Lows

Too much argument is dangerous to one's sense of self. Disagreement at this level can lead to exhaustion, depression, and disintegration, and there's the key: "integration." It's what you want, and it's the place from which you function best, but if you want to "level-up" you have to give something up. New integration is, hopefully, the result of disintegration of something old. Disintegration comes first, and new integration cannot be guaranteed. We avoid disintegration because we are attached to whom we've become, and our personalities float like thin ice over the substrate of our conflicted selves. This sad state of affairs explains a lot of people's behavior and the slow flow of social change.

If you aspire to more than your lot in life, more than fate might deliver to you, then there is a way around the predicament. There is a way to be a mad scientist with your psyche and create an *übermensch*. It is the fear of doing this that provides the basis for so many horror movies. Like any powerful force, you must either control it or position yourself with regard to it. Otherwise, it will burn you up.



Multiples

The key is this: you must develop other personalities and control them in you, or control yourself in their presence. Actually, you already have these other personalities, but you have layered them one atop the other. The topmost one is your "normal" personality which, as you're undoubtedly aware, can be cracked or broken. Through those cracks other personalities emerge, like fluids through torn skin. To improve your ability to integrate you must develop personal relationships with the unintegrated elements, you must allow them to develop as personalities of their own. To grow into people in their own right.

Here is where the skill comes in. Like wild animals, these elements have needs of their own, and you must come to know them, trust and protect them. This is not going to be a topic of casual social discourse. Your friends won't understand. If they are not ready to engage with themselves in the same way, then they will flee from you like villagers from the wolfman on the full moon.

There are many examples of dissociated personalities, most of which are not recognized for what they are, and some are strictly forbidden. Start with your emotion. Recognize that each of your emotions, if given free reign, would take you into extreme areas of your personality. We visit these areas by accident, as through trauma, and intention, when inebriated. In both cases we expect a supportive social context. But the same

constraining context that protects us also prevents us from developing these personas as functioning aspects of ourselves.

It is possible to be fully in possession of one's wits in an emergency, under stress, or through the course of injury. People who can do this are called emergency responders, soldiers, or athletes. It is possible to be unusually capable when in the throes of love and exuberance, as are poets, lovers, prophets... and maniacs. These different people are in you. They lie at different layers, and you can draw upon their insights if you can develop a closer and more collegial relationship with them.



Dissociation

Here's the danger, and this is part of the reason why you have not done this before. Each of these personalities has not only a different world view, they have different memories. Many of us have memories that are painful to the point of being tragic or, regrettably, unbearable. When you get near an unbearable memory you dissociate. You lose the connection between your main personality and the other personality, the one with the memory. When the dissociation is complete, the connection is lost and the memory does not carry over. The pain is avoided. At the same time, the potential to grow past the trauma is lost. Memories are not accurate records of anything, they are enzymes in a digestive process of personal growth.

Our personalities are fragile, easily bruised or broken. Personalities mend but scars mark buried memories like frost heaves in the road. Descending into the deeper layers of one's personalities can be a dangerous proposition. Society is rife with cautionary tales warning us not to. One needs a guide, and the general lack of guidance is the other reason that we don't mine the assets of our psyche.

Most of what I do as a therapist is to support people on these journeys. I can support them on their search for guidance because there are personalities in us who are guides. You will probably recall times when you entered difficult personal territory, an area of conflict or pain—maybe yours but likely that of another person—and in these cases there often comes a point where we feel empowered. We suddenly know what we need to do, and we do it with clarity. When asked how we accomplished this feat we might reply, "I don't know. I just knew what I had to do."

Insight

In these times we are literally possessed with a higher power. It is this power we need to become familiar with. These are personalities who can enlighten us, but they are not people whom we can become. These guiding personalities remains detached from everyday affairs. They are not interested. If you became an ascetic and lived in a cave, then they might emerge as your normal personality. If that's your future, you don't need my advice.

This piece started as advice on problem solving. It may appear to have degenerated into dreamy reflections, but that's not the case. To apply Einstein's quote, that "we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them," you will not solve a problem by being the same person who first conceptualized the problem. You cannot avoid repetitive thinking simply by rearranging the order of things, which is just another statement from the same perspective. To truly think differently requires being different, by accessing a different part of you.

I have talked about what lies on the other side of the fence. I've referred you to your own memories of having been different, but the person I'm speaking to—the you that is reading this—the normal, depressed, elated, or any other self is still just one person. The self that fate has dealt you. You want to get beyond that, to move between selves, to see the world from different points of view at will. To become a multi-dimensional person.

This is not advice for advanced spiritual practice. That would be a misunderstanding, a repeat of the failure of Eastern religion taken to the West. This is advice for solving problems in a complex society, a disrupted and disruptive society where divergent forces have become intertwined.

It is not easy to develop flexibility so radical that whole different personalities are accessible. It can be a dangerous exercise, but I think that we don't have a choice. Just as humanity is tinkering with powers of disruptive potential, so your life is filled with them. Are you adrift on a peaceful lake beneath the glow of sunrise, or drifting toward a waterfall by the glow of forest fires? We are living in times where there is an imperative to become more, and to do so without delay.



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