



Dispossession

We're unaware of most of what goes on inside us. We rely on our "people" to tell us.

"You know an odd feeling? Sitting on the toilet eating a chocolate candy bar."

— George Carlin

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Ego

We are unaware of most of what is happening inside us. Who we feel ourselves to be, our "self" or personality, is a boat that carries our parts through sometimes rough water. This boat needs to float, it needs to remain upright. It is a container of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, and that's the first order of business.

Consider yourself to be the deck of this boat, and from this deck, you overlook the waters around you. Your main task is to protect yourself, whoever you feel yourself to be, and to maintain safety for yourself and whoever else is on board.

For many people most of the time—and for some all of the time—that's as far as self-consciousness gets. These folks have just as much personality as anyone else, they just don't try separate from it.

You might think it silly to ask, "Who is at home?" with regard to anyone's personality, but I disagree. When someone asks something of you, where does your answer come from? No one can answer that, so let's ask a simpler question: "Does your answer always come from the same place?" Now things get interesting.

Clearly, our responses can have a different texture. We ascribe this to our perceptions. We "feel" differences

so we see differences and express ourselves differently. However, even in the absence of seeing things we can feel differently and have different opinions. To account for this, we say that we've come to different conclusions, or we're acting from a different mood or state.

If something pushes you far enough, your attitude will change. You can quickly change from love to impatience to humor, humility, jealousy, or anger. In these different states your voice changes, as does your face and posture. Your energy certainly changes as may your feeling of health or illness. It is physically taxing to move from state to state. Typically, too much change gives on a headache.

You may say that all of these different moods and emotions are just aspects of you. You may say that sometimes, under some conditions, you lose control. I ask you, "When you lose control, who is in control? Who takes over?"

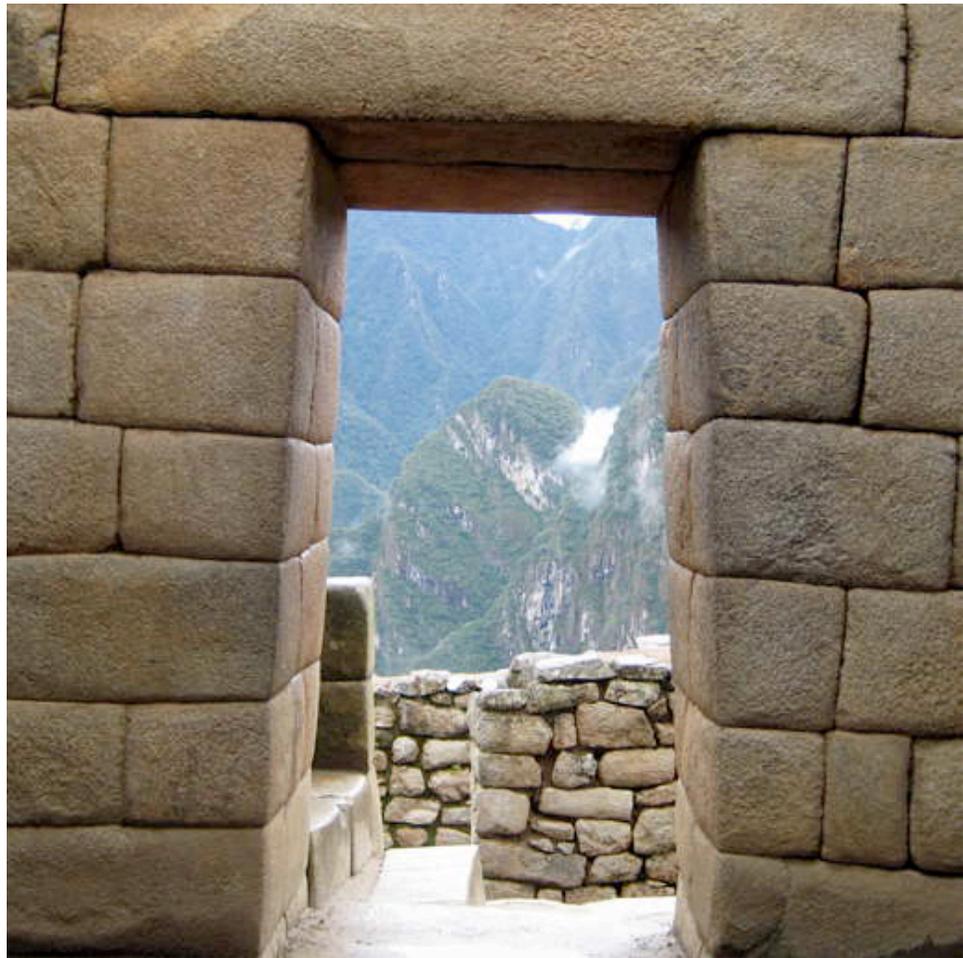
You'll probably respond, "It depends." By which you'll mean that the strongest feelings will prevail. You may even have the ability to "work it out," by which I mean consider things from different angles and find a considered course of action.

I ask you to observe this: from any of these "points of view" you can tell the whole story about one thing or another.

These stories are not engineered on the spot. In fact, they're not really engineered at all, they just are. They are like perceptions: you just have them. You feel one way or another about whatever it is you're involved in, and you can tell the whole story without skipping a beat.

What's more, depending on which of these moods you're in, your story will go in different directions. More than that, your different moods will call up different evidence, use different logic, and physically react in different ways. These moods are not small parts of you, they can and they probably have taken you over completely. Each is a personality, and you're full of them.

I further suggest that such considerations go on inside you all the time, not only when you "lose it," but even now. You are always a group of personalities vying for control of your consciousness but, for some reason, you only see the words put in your mouth and not the different hands that put them there.



Health and Self

What I'm describing is normal. We feel as if we are an integrated personality. That turn of phrase, by itself, suggests a multiplicity. Our personalities are like a fairly well functioning city council. There can be disagreement or confusion, and there is sometimes bad-behavior, but things generally get done without anyone getting hurt.

In hypnosis, there is something called "Parts Therapy" which is done by asking a person to speak for their different points of view as if those points of view had minds of their own. In many cases, the attitudes that emerge are quite different and distinct and, not all that surprising, they are accompanied by changes of voice, posture, and emotion. This is common, but it's more useful than normal because now, when the voices are given separate platform, a person can work things out.



Possession

I claim we're possessed by one personality or another all of the time, but this is not what most people mean by "possession." That word is usually reserved for something pathological or, even worse, evil. That kind of possession refers to a dangerous or aberrant character trait—call it etheric, spiritual, or nonhuman, it doesn't matter. I claim that this is somewhat a matter of degree, but what we often overlook is the opposite situation, that of dis-possession.

Dispossession is when there is no one at home; when you're lost and feeling rudderless. You're not even sure you have an opinion. This can happen as the result of a simple surprise, and we kind of like that feeling, under the right circumstances. It's actually quite nice to have no preconceived reaction to a lovely accident. It results in all sorts of overly positive "people" rushing in, even if their tenancy will end when one's normally measured personalities return.

I have a client who has trouble expressing themself. They complain that they have difficulty making their feelings known. I ask them to return to a situation where they would have liked to communicate better and I ask them what they're saying to themselves. They say they hear nothing, they have no voices. Maybe they do, but they're not hearing them. Or maybe they do, and they're not telling me. Or maybe they don't, and they just feel like they can't feel but feel they should.

If you want to express yourself, clearly, you first need to have something to express. If you're going to "speak your mind," your mind must first have a voice to speak with. If you want to express yourself but you

don't have any feelings to express, then you've got a different problem from that person who is just reticent.



Re-Possession

There's a shamanic condition called "soul loss," and an accompanying process of soul retrieval. Soul loss can be mild or debilitating as it ranges over the spectrum of losing connection with parts of yourself of varying importance. If this part is small, the result may only be a kind of analgesia, feeling nonresponsive or disconnected. This may be the result of an injury, memory, or dissatisfaction. This loss of sensitivity can be a coping mechanism that enables you to remain present and alert until you can resolve your situation.

But when the loss is great, such as in heartbreak, you can become seriously physically ill, or mentally disabled. If this condition becomes chronic or permanent, it's called soul loss and it indicates the need for soul retrieval.

I think of soul retrieval as the recovery of an important aspect of your personality. My client's complaint of the lack of ability to share their feelings, coupled with their lack of feelings, indicates they've lost touch with an important part of themselves.

Soul retrieval takes many forms, all center around the recovery of the power of truth. One needs to venture into the land of true feeling, and once there, to bring back a voice that can speak from that place. This is not a simple process because there is often something in the way. There has been some hardening or freezing that needs to be reversed.

Some people, those who are psychopathic, are not ready for soul recovery. They have lost not only feeling, but truth as well. Psychopaths are famous for being both insensitive and dishonest and they are authentically so. That is, they have no feelings for themselves and no sense of honesty in themselves. You cannot argue

with them and talking goes nowhere.

My client is not psychopathic, they can feel emotions and they can feel truth. It will be possible for them to regain strong feelings. This client probably also suffers from their natural reticence, and that, too, has its origins. But reticence is situational, and once a person can express the situation that they need, they can create that situation.

Here is a short audio recording called “Feeling” in which I ask you to call up in your mind situations you feel strongly about, both positive and negative. I ask you to imagine enjoying the positive and then enjoying the negative, and sensing the reactions you have in your body. I ask you to hear the voices in your head that speak their reaction to what is right and what is not right and to give those voices a larger space.

The purpose of “Feeling” is to recognize the call to act, and to have the feeling you need in order to judge what action is appropriate. Even this simple state of authenticity is a form of possession, the possession of one’s rights and one’s wits.



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