

Aldea Explores Series



ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ

The oracles of old told us: “know thyself.” The Prophet Muhammad pointed to the same wisdom by saying: “To know God intimately, know yourself intimately.” There is no way to know God well unless we know our own selves well. We have to know what makes us tick, what brings joy to us, and where our own demons are. That kind of inner work is hard, patient, slow, and rewarding. I’ve been fond of quoting W. B. Yeats:

*“It takes more courage
to examine the dark corners of your own soul
than it does for a soldier
to fight on a battlefield.”*

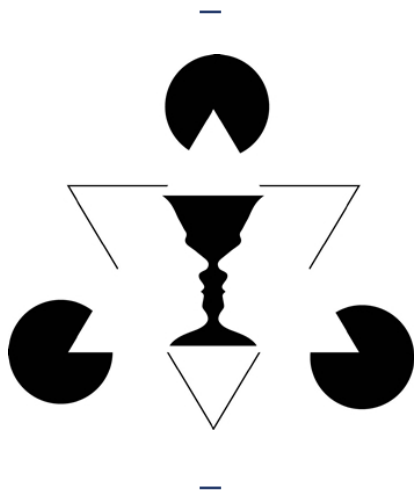
Let us go beyond Yeats. Yes, let us examine the dark corners of our souls and let us illuminate them. Let’s see the broken spaces, the wounds, which become the openings for the light to pour through us.

Tending Our Inner Lives to Make the World Whole. Omid Safi. [Read the full article HERE](#)

Reflect and ponder the quote. Let it speak to you right where you are today.

The Journey of Self Discovery

The self may be a lot like Kanizsa triangle. Notice the white triangle with the cup inside doesn't actually exist. It emerges when the other elements are combined.



In teaching, the Buddha never spoke of humans as persons existing in some fixed or static way. Instead, he described us as a collection of five changing processes: the processes of the physical body, of feelings, of perceptions, of responses, and of the flow of consciousness that experiences them all. Our sense of self arises whenever we grasp at or identify with these patterns.

Jack Kornfield

The Ultimate Selfie

The Ultimate Selfie

In week one of our series, *Know Thyself*, we explored the idea of *taking the ultimate selfie*—the journey into and beyond the self. We discovered that “the self” is not as straightforward as we might think. We explored two important ideas:

The self is constructed

The construct of “you,” according to buddhists and neuroscience (to name a two groups), occurs when we (over) identify with five dynamics: the processes of the physical body, of feelings, of perceptions, of responses, and of the flow of consciousness that experiences them all.

When these five work in combination, they can produce the sense of an individual self. But seen another way, they are simply a collection of phenomena all occurring together.

Question: What makes the combination of the five dynamics feel like “me” or “you?”

Answer: Nothing more or less than the stories we tell ourselves about them.

Can you see how “you” might be a construct? If so, how could that change how you view what you are and what you experience? Could it enable you to cling less to the stories you tell yourself or others tell you about yourself?

Whether life will continue on this world now depends on us. And whether we serve, and perceive a life work living, depends on the kind of selves we are able to create, and on the social forms that we succeed in bulking.

Certainly there are many momentous task looming ahead in these perilous times: from saving the rains forests to protecting the ozone layer, from reducing the number of births to keeping those already born from tearing each other to pieces.

But no tasks in more essential in the long run than finding a way to develop selves that will support evolution.

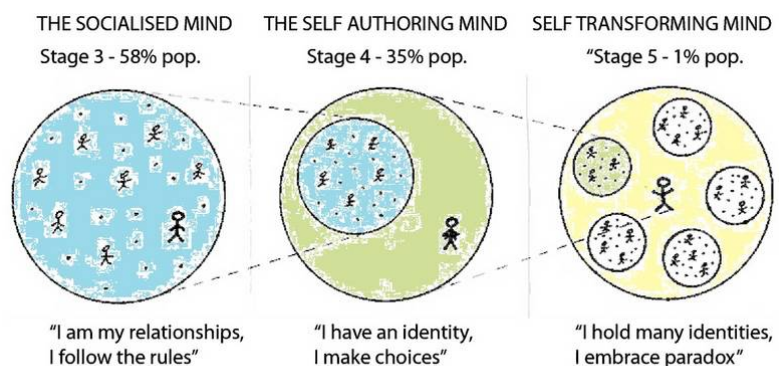
On this depend all the other positive consequences. If there is to be a history, our minds must be prepared to make it.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

The Ultimate Selfie

The self is evolving

Just because the self is constructed doesn't mean it's not important. If we cling to the idea of a self it can create problems. Ironically though, if we don't seek to evolve our self, it can also create problems. Perhaps the fact that we construct our "self" makes it easier to think about evolving into something better - as "individuals" and as a collective.



Excerpt: Constructive Development Theory - Robert Kegan "In Over our Heads"

Reflect on Robert Kegan's three phases of adult evolution. Notice how each "evolution" enables the adult to construct a better self. Also notice that the final circle, "many selves," is only possible if we let go of a fixed view of self and embrace "self as a construct."

Where are you in Keegan's model?

How could you evolve to the right?

The DNA of Knowing Yourself

Constructed

"You" are not real. You are a story you, and others, are telling you at any given moment.

Evolving

"You" can evolve. Tell yourself ever-better stories about "you" and hang around people who do the same.

Reflect on the DNA of "knowing yourself." What specific actions can you take to engage the knowing yourself so you can evolve into a better you?

Going Deeper



Seeing the System as a Source of Self
How an Integrated Identity Creates a
Sense of Belonging (and a More
Compassionate World)

By Dr. Dan Siegel

Dan Siegel, MD is a pioneer in
understanding the mind and self.
Check out his article on the self. It will
definitely make you think, about

everything you hold dear about “yourself.” Click [HERE](#) to read the article.



Mediate: The Self Constructed and Evolving Again and Again