

Unearthing Your True Self



What causes someone to lose their identity?

- People pleasing
- Hiding/masks
- Loss of self-worth or self-esteem
- Believing negative things said to you, about you or your own negative thoughts about yourself
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Trying to live up to the expectations of others
- Influences
 - Cultural
 - Society
 - Authorities
 - Peers
- Depression
- Media

What other things can rob us of our identity?

Why do you think it is easier to let go of our identity than to stay true to it?

"Be careful who you pretend to be. You might forget who you are! - Hota Kotb

How can we unearth our true selves?

- Likes/dislikes
 - When we get busy people pleasing we tend to adopt likes and dislikes of those we are trying to please.
 - To figure out our true likes and dislikes we need to block out the thoughts of what others want us to like and try things with an awareness of how these things make us feel.
 - Once we rediscover our likes and dislikes, we can implement them into our lives and not let them go again.

What are some likes and dislikes that you have allowed to fade in order to please others?

- Passions
 - Things that we are passionate about give us life, motivate us and drive us forward. When we lose sight of these things our daily activities drain us and we lose our motivation.
 - Sometimes we lay our passions down because we do not have (or make) the time to pursue them. Other times, we have laid them down for a time because we have other things we need to prioritize for a time, like children or an ailing parent. Regardless of the reason, laying down our passions is a choice and we can pick them up again.

What are some passions that you have had to lay down for a time? Is now the time to pick it up again?

- Strengths and weaknesses
 - If our weaknesses are constantly pointed out to us we begin to believe these weaknesses are our identity. We are not defined by our weakness. Instead remember that our weaknesses are an opportunity to lean into God and He will provide strength in every area of weakness.
 - We need to focus on our strengths and cultivate them. God gave us these giftings and we need to be able to step into them without hesitation. The more we operate in these strengths the more confident we will become.
 - If you are unsure of where you are weak or strong, look at the things in your life you do well, almost without any effort. These are your strengths. Then the things that you struggle to do and despise having to do are most likely your areas of weakness. Allow others to help you in areas you are weak and continue to build up the areas where you are strong.

What are some areas of strength that you can build up?

- Personality Traits
 - We have been created with a unique personality, each of us have certain traits that are mixed together to create us. Are you funny or have a cheerful disposition? Are you a more serious person or more studious. These are things about ourselves that are inherent.
 - In order to belong there are times we try to be something we are not, and squash these traits down. It is important to recognize it, or we may forget what our natural traits are.
 - To regain your lost personality traits, it may take some reflection on who you have been throughout your life and what traits were visible when you were being the most authentic.

Reflect on your life and write down the personality traits that best reflect who you are at your core.

- Character
 - Unlike personality traits, character traits develop over time, they are usually forged through difficult times. These traits can be hidden but tend to emerge again. Character traits are patience, generosity, kindness, etc.
 - Many times we do not recognize character traits when they have been built in us over time, so we just do not know they are there, resulting in us not activating them.
 - For example: We go through a time of immense pressure at work, through it we have built resilience and as work has returned to normal we forget we have this resilience. The next time the pressure rises at work the thought is not again, I don't think I can do this. In reality, you can and have, you just need to activate the resilience that has been built and is sitting waiting to be put into action.

What character traits do you have that you are not activating?

- Purpose
 - We all have a unique purpose. One that only we can fulfill. Many things in life can cause us to lose sight of our purpose but it is still there. We may be blinded by circumstances in our lives that seem insurmountable, we may even be told we will not amount to anything and that belief has skewed our sense of purpose.
 - The greatest way to rediscover our purpose is to reflect back to the times in our lives when we were the most focused. What were we headed towards, what were the motivating factors, what was our overall goal. These all speak to a specific purpose. Another way is to ask God what His purpose for us is. He will lead and guide you.

What do you believe your purpose is? If you are unsure ask God to help you.

Romans 8:28 "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.

- Dreams
 - Our dreams are the big picture of our purpose. When life has not gone according to plan our dreams are sometimes unrealized and we lose hope of ever achieving them. We put them on the back burner for the fateful day when we can bring them back again.
 - We need to make the conscious choice to pursue our dreams or they will continue collecting dust in the back of our minds. Our dreams will not fall into our lap, we need to work towards it, even if it is a small step each day.
 - It is only when we give up on our dreams, that we can lose them.

What dreams have you had for your life and what steps could you take towards them today?

- Ambitions
 - Ambitions are things we work toward that are on a smaller scale to our dreams. They are things we want to achieve, things we want to become and things we want to do.
 - Ambitions can be thwarted by self-doubt. If we fail at achieving our ambitions, we may choose to put future ones on the shelf. Do not let them stay there, do not be discouraged.
 - Our ambitions tell us a lot about what we are drawn towards, what we want to accomplish and our motivations.

What are some of your ambitions, and what do they tell you about yourself?

Jeremiah 29:11 " For I know the plans i have for you," says the Lord, "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

- Talents

- We all have things that we are talented in, whether we recognize these talents or not they are still there. If someone has a singing talent, but has never sung a note then they would never know this talent is there. This is why it is important for us even as adults to try new things, there may be talents you have yet to discover, like treasures waiting to be discovered.
- Then there are the talents you have that you have forgotten about, due to lack of time or lack of use. These talents do not disappear, even though they are not in use, they may be a bit rusty, but all you need to do is start using it again and it will all come back.

What talents do you have that have been forgotten about or left behind? Would you like to engage this talent again?

- Skills and Abilities

- Unlike talents, skills and abilities are things we have learned either through education or experience. You may be talented in an area in which you have gained additional skills, this makes the talent that much stronger.
- Skills and abilities are in use whenever you face tasks that require them. There are times when we will pretend we are not in order to get attention, or have others step in and do it for us. These skills may get rusty over time of not being used but do not disappear altogether. Your skills and abilities are part of what makes you who you are.

What skills and abilities do you have?

- Reflection on our young selves
 - As children we are our truest selves. Life happens and we are traumatized or influenced in different directions, causing us to make choices to make others around us happy. Who we are at 3, 4 or 5 can tell us a lot about who we have been at our core. Looking back at these early years can show us specific things we may not notice about ourselves today.

Reflect on your early childhood, what things did you do as a child that you do not do anymore and what does that tell you about yourself?

- Relationship with God
 - As we grow closer to God, we become closer to who God created us to be. This is true of people in the Bible, so it is the same for us. There is a difference between knowing God and knowing about God. You may know a lot about God, but this does not create relationship. It is in relationship with God that we truly understand ourselves and see ourselves through His eyes.
 - We were made in His image. Some people think the closer we get to God the more we will be the same, however God made us all unique for a purpose, therefore the closer we get to God, the more in unity we are with other Christians, but the more unique we are in ourselves.
 - When we start imitating other Christians we are no longer imitating Christ.

Have you ever noticed the closer you are in relationship to God the more you feel like yourself? What does this tell you about yourself?

FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

An intimate message from God to you.

My Child

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2 I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28 For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4

I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7 I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15

My question is... Will you be my child? John 1:12-13

I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

*Love, Your Dad
Almighty God*

When you find your identity in God you stop trying to find your identity through other people. ~ unknown

Activation

LIKES AND DISLIKES

Our likes and dislikes tells us a great deal about who we truly are. As people pleasers many times we have abandoned our likes to embrace the likes of our peers in order to belong. Doing this for too long will potentially cause us to forget our own.

Take the next few minutes and forget about what everyone else likes or what anyone else thinks you should like, I want you to make a list of things you like and dislike. Be honest with yourself, this may be the hardest part of this exercise because many times we have convinced ourselves that our tastes have changed when in reality we were adopting to someone else's likes.

When you find your true identity it will change your perspective.

4 Keys to Remember

- 01 INFLUENCES IN OUR LIVES ARE ONE OF THE GREATEST INSTIGATORS IN LOSING OUR IDENTITY, BE AWARE OF HOW THE INFLUENCES IN YOUR LIFE ARE IMPACTING YOU
- 02 WHEN EVALUATING ALL OF THE ASPECTS OF YOURSELF REMEMBER HONESTY IS KEY TO DISCOVERING YOUR TRUE SELF
- 03 DO NOT BE AFRAID TO BE WHO YOU ARE AND NOT WHO OTHERS WANT YOU TO BE. THE MORE YOU EXPERIENCE REALTIONSHPIS AS YOUR TRUE SELF THE MORE CONFIDENCE YOU GAIN
- 04 GOD CREATED YOU FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE. HE PLACED DREAMS DEEP WITHIN YOUR HEART AND THEY ARE MEANT FOR YOU AND YOU ALONE. DO NOT BE WARY IF OTHERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT WAS MEANT FOR YOU!

"BE YOURSELF; EVERYONE ELSE IS ALREADY TAKEN."

Oscar Wilde