

Evolution of Consciousness

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Consciousness evolves over time when we are able to be a witness to our thoughts and behaviors. This allows us to be in a process of better understanding where our thoughts originate from. In this paper I will be discussing how consciousness expands as it unhooks from reactive feelings and mindsets based out of the experience of our history and programing of the past and turns instead towards organic expression coming from the present moment and the authentic Self. I will consider the implications of this shift in the individual as it begins to disidentify with the past in the process of awakening to the discovery of the Self. As put so eloquently by Joseph Campbell, 'I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonance with our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.' Magsamen & Ross (2023, p. 27)

Through incarnation we bring spirit into matter. We begin from birth the process of learning about who we think we are and what we think about the life around us based on what we have been taught and experienced. We tend to develop mindsets and conclusions about our reality based on survival or coping mechanisms and the need to feel safe, loved and wanted. We call the known experience the concrete mind. Our concrete mind or mindsets have kept us safe in the past. But if we continue to keep ideas and thoughts that were created from past experiences as our only truth, the mind energy becomes a closed cycle which tends to be self-referential and binds or limits us from growth and expansion. An idea that we have known to be true from the past could have helped us at the time stay safe. In order to stay with what is our current reality and be with what is unfolding in the present moment, we must be willing to let go of what we think we already know. Letting go of the concrete mind can be frightening because our thoughts and beliefs were formed to keep us safe and to help us feel that we belonged. When we feel safe enough, we can begin to disidentify from our concrete mind and question our ideas and beliefs. It is within this sense of safety that we can begin to open to the abstract mind which is informed by the Self.

The mind has the ability to see and reflect into matter, our outer world. It can also see itself as thoughts and beliefs, and it can reflect on spirit or Self. It is critical for our evolution for the mind to be willing to see into all directions and be able to know where it is seeing from.

We can use the logic of the concrete mind to help us transcend the concrete mind. We do this by using techniques to get us out of a triggered state and into better regulation and more into a witness self. There are times we need our concrete minds, like when the world changes suddenly, and we need to discern what to do. The concrete mind helps us negotiate between panic, complacency or despair. But ultimately, we need to disidentify from our concrete mind to truly know who we are.

Sometimes

I look out at everything

Growing so wild

And faithfully beneath

The sky and wonder

Why we are the one

Terrible

Part of creation

Privileged

To refuse our flowering.

-David Whyte, From "The Sun"

Disidentification gives the mind space to better assess which direction it is coming from. When we are in the 'I' (consciousness and will), we can use discernment and have choice. As Joan Evans points out, 'Discrimination is not given to an individual, it is a faculty of the mind which is awakened and developed during the journey towards self-awareness.' Evans (2022, p.218). Until the concrete thought or belief is transmuted and integrated our mindsets chain us to re-create from our identification with our conditioned experiences from the past. As we move beyond the concrete mind we can open to more creativity and new ideas that come from the unknown and from the expression of the Self.

We disidentify when we begin to see where our held thoughts and beliefs come from. We are then able to unpack more content that has been playing out unconsciously. When we do this, we better understand ourselves and gain meaning from our past experiences. With this insight come new ways of thinking and being in the world.

When I began to question my thoughts, I discovered that I had a mindset that had been hidden deep within my unconscious but was very much still directing my behavior and sense of myself in the world. I identified that I held a belief that if I was my true self and said or did something that disappointed another that I would be judged and that, ultimately, I would not be ok. Having been raised by a narcissistic mother, I have many examples from my childhood where this was true. The sense that I had throughout my childhood that if I did something to upset my mother, that she would shut me out was accurate, and ultimately, in my young adulthood did come true. As an adult, I was able to

handle the rejection, but the belief that I would not be ok was still embedded deep within a mindset and was unconsciously driving much of my behavior.

I began the process of unwinding this mindset that if I am my true self I will be judged. And if I am judged, I will feel shame. I saw that I felt shame from the wound of being judged and of not feeling seen, loved, valued or wanted. I felt disconnected from the other and then from my Self. I saw and felt the shame when I disappointed others or when people judged me, because I felt the separation and of not being met in the I-Thou relationship. I felt what it feels like to be the object and the need to exist solely to be a certain way for other to be ok with themselves. It seems I have held this belief for a very long time, and it was also reinforced through many of my relationships as an adult. This belief has driven me to hide and to be hyper-vigilant about what I say and do with others. I tend to hesitate to speak up for myself and tend to not stand up in my truth. I often avoid conflict or making others angry. I have a fear of others not liking me. This mindset has kept me safe in the past and given me the feeling of belonging and connecting especially to my mother. It also kept me quiet and silent and has continued to cover up my true expression.

Through clearly seeing this mindset, I have come to realize that it does not serve me anymore. Today, I have enough discernment to know when it is safe to be in my vulnerability. I have the skills to know how and when to speak up for myself, from my true self. I have the insight to know that when others are disappointed or angry at me that I do not have to take that on. I can choose not to pick up others' feelings as my responsibility. This process has given me more space to hear when others are disappointed with me, and I am more capable of discerning if I have done something I need to make amends for or if this is more about the other person. I now know in an integrated and full way that, if I am my true self, and I am judged or if I disappoint the other, I will be ok. It was through the process of the 'I' being able to synthesis the experience of the past with the knowledge of the present that is leading me towards true expression of the Self.

The more we are able to use the mind to identify where our thoughts and beliefs are coming from, the more there is the ability for the 'I' to be aligned with the transpersonal. It is in this alignment that the Self emerges as a need within the 'I' to be expressed in the outer world or outer experience. In this way the transcendent energy of all that is has the opening to come through the individual into form, into matter.

As we allow ourselves to heal and realize that we are not separate from spirit and our soul selves, then we are no longer controlled by our fear or our thoughts and beliefs that we have constructed from our past. We wake up from our individual and collective trauma, and we break free from being captive to the influences of social media or the efforts of those in power to control our minds and our behavior. This allows us to raise our consciousness and become agents for healing and change in our own lives and in the interactions we have with others. The more of us that heal and awaken in this way, the more we can support healing at a collective level.

At times the suffering on the planet is too much for me. I want to believe that I can help change what is happening in the world. Sometimes everything feels so far beyond what we can do as humanity, and yet I also know everything we need is inside of us. As we heal and bring things into consciousness, we become aware of mindsets that no longer serve us or our planet. When I was little, I believed I was separate. I was a girl, separate from a boy. A daughter, separate from a mother. My white skin was separate from another's dark skin. I became separate from the other and more separate from myself. Now, I am much older and wiser and have a different knowing. Now, I feel I am becoming one with myself and with the other. I am much more open and freer to be present to the love that natural flows through me.

When I was a child I desperately longed to be noticed, mainly by my parents more than by anyone else. It was their attention and love that I yearned for and at some primal level ached for. I began to think that it was something that I wasn't doing or was not doing well enough that was the reason for their neglect and oversight. I believed that if I could just change me, I would gain their approval and love. And so, I began to live a life that I felt would earn me the right to their love. I worked hard at the act of being the perfect daughter. But after years of effort and role playing, I realized my strategy was not working. It had failed, and so had I. All the work to gain my parents' love was in vain. And the mask that had become my identity slowly began to crack. Beneath the surface ran a river of beliefs and devastating sadness, all the way down to my bones. And my heart began to melt because of the sadness, and I tried to hold my heart and stop the sadness. But the river of

sadness ran through my fingers. And I wondered how I could stop all of this sadness, before I lost my heart, and it became one with this unstoppable current of sadness.

Through the years I began to heal and understand that I had no control over the flow of my emotions and of my soul. I realized that my feelings must breathe and move with their own natural rhythm. As they are released, I let go of my thoughts and beliefs created in my past. My artificial wings that were so perfectly constructed behind my mask from childhood has now crumbled to ashes. When I withdrew into my cocoon to prepare for my rebirth my deepest feelings released and washed over me, clearing out my wounds. And I am slowly returning to my natural state, my true Self. I am more and more breaking open from my chrysalis state, rebirthing myself from the ashes. For the first time, I feel alive and free. My wings, made perfect through divine grace, stretched out far and wide, lifting me high in my authenticity, taking me far beyond anything I believed possible.

As I continue on the healing path and strengthen my alignment with my soul Self, I begin to see the process from a higher perspective and better realize the gifts and profound lessons of this journey. The process of healing and growing in conscious awareness never ends. Through healing and becoming more aware of our mindsets we deepen and open to increasing levels of consciousness and wholeness. We become less identified with our personal stories and the content of our lives and more aware of the journey and of how we are each a part of the evolution of the Earth and cosmos. We are more open to living from the heart. As we become more soul centered, our minds are entrained to the energy of our hearts, allowing us to no longer be controlled by constricting beliefs from the past or our fears about the future. We are more able to live in the present moment and to be in the mystery of all that is.

We are no longer defined by the past or caught in a fixed identification of who we think we are. Our sense of identity becomes more fluid, and we are more open to a changing sense of ourselves and are able to engage with others without judgment, seeing them more clearly and honoring them in their complexity. We move beyond polarization and the dualities of the self and others, good and bad. We see ourselves and others in true interconnectedness and in the ways that we mirror and complement each other.

‘We often think of peace as the absence of war, that if powerful countries would reduce their weapon arsenals, we could have peace. But if we look deeply into the weapons, we see our own minds, our own prejudices, fears and ignorance. Even if we transport all the bombs to the moon, the roots of war and the roots of bombs are still there, in our hearts and minds and sooner or later we will make new bombs. To work for peace is to uproot war from ourselves and from the hearts of men and women.’ -Thich Nhat Hahn

Consciousness is evolving over time. As we disidentify from the thoughts and beliefs we have formed out of the woundedness of our past, we set ourselves free to come into alignment with our soul Self. From our true essence, we allow the energy of the cosmos to flow through. We become clear vessels for divine grace to flow into form to create new thoughts and a new world.

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