

Who Do You Think You Are?

Your identity is, by default, defined by where you were born or the way you were raised. But it should not be this way. Nor should it be with your ability to do what you want in life.

It is tempting to settle with the influences we have early in life. They give us guidelines that we think that we can always fall back on when the life's new challenges come too quickly or hit us too hard. If you have the courage to undo the foundations of your upbringing, you will open yourself to all the versions of yourself that you can become. This is how you figure out what you actually care about.

With enough breadth of experience, you reach a turning point with your life. You are no longer solely a consumer of influence. You start to produce influence for others to use. The specific type of influence you become known for is what will determine your place in the world among the rest of humanity. Reaching this point authentically is vital to your sustained appreciation for life. All other paths lead to eventual misery and a sense of separation from yourself.

The only reason you don't already know who you are is because you have never had to seriously ponder the question. The world has always provided you a thousand prepared identities to fill your developing mind. There was never enough empty space for the discovery process to begin. Now that you have seen the empty space, you have only to make the choice to continue questioning the ideas already floating around in your head. You need only continue pursuing your thirst for the truth about yourself.

Finding yourself is not about adding more ingredients to your mental mix. It is about removing everything except the most essential parts of your experience. It is about reducing everything in your awareness to its simplest possible state, and resting in that achievement until motion is again needed.

The purpose of living (not the purpose of life) is to implement your true identity in the world. Every action you ever take stems from your present knowledge of self. Self should not be defined by the distractions in your mind or the relationships you've formed. Don't allow yourself to be limited to the memories of how you've interacted with the world so far. You are bigger than that. Self is something primordial about you that must be arrived at, remembered, through the trials of pure inquiry.

Sometimes the inquiry is passive. Why did Jesus wait in the desert for 40 days to "hear the voice of God"? Why did Buddha decide to meditate under the Bodhi tree after all his active experiments to reach enlightenment had failed? Insanity needs space to evaporate from the mind and dissolve into nothingness. In the aftermath, you will know that only you

remain.

Your development is only now beginning. Your interests and abilities can be combined into something unique and powerful. The creature you emerge as can be a force for progress, but only if you are confident in expressing yourself. No matter what else the world concerns itself with, you will always have the option to stand tall and alter the flow of human thinking. But you won't know what you really are until you've tried (and failed many times) to become more than what you think you are. It's time to begin.