

Finding the Real Self

By Penney Peirce



Literature and films are full of characters going off to “find themselves.” After all, it’s one of the classic mythological tales—the Hero’s Journey. But what does finding yourself mean? In my experience, the Self is not out there anywhere and it always seemed silly to go questing for it when it’s actually living inside, quietly, and has been all along. Look outside and we can miss it. Because the Self is so silent and formless, the mind has difficulty isolating it. The Self is not a *thing* that can be found and defined—it’s an *experience* that can be felt whenever you place attention on what’s deeply true, what you love, or what you’re authentically curious about.

It’s easy to assume the Self is our personality, the face we show others, the beliefs we form to be safe in a crazy world, or the emotional reactions we have to situations, but that’s a shallow experience. Identifying with our history, what we look like, who we know, and what we achieve—all the recognizable “stuff”—is just a skin covering the deep, still, wise, magnificent being inside. This deep, quiet you is actually the soul, and—surprise!—it’s in the body already, not out in space.

“Somewhere in me is something bigger and greater—and I *want* it!”

The search for Self-as-Soul is a universal thing—you may notice there’s always a little itch or niggling thought below the surface of your awareness: “There’s supposed to be more.” “Somewhere in me is something bigger and greater—and I *want* it!” If you resign yourself to a shallow identity, or to living in a box defined by family or society, it can feel like ten wet blankets thrown on top of you. You may carry them dutifully and trudge along like a little trooper, or fight and rebel. Either way, you will feel unhappy at a deep level, and neither behavior frees you. There’s another option. In any moment, you can simply drop into what I call your preferred state, “home frequency,” original tone, or the experience of “deep comfort.” You can identify with *this*—an experience, not a thing. It’s something simple and familiar, innocent and childlike—not grandiose. This state of being is the Real Self.

Zeroing In on the Real Deal

Sensing the real You often starts with a comparison: “What’s more, or less, real and deeply comfortable (not superficially, temporarily comfortable) to me?” Choose honestly and you build a conviction of truth. I grew up in a family where, as the older child, I was expected to follow in my father’s footsteps and become the president of a corporation. I had high grades and was ambitious, so it made sense. On the other hand, my younger

sister had some dyslexia and an accident at a young age caused her to have to repeat a grade; expectations for her were less rigorous. Some teachers even thought she was “slow.” Those unconscious ideas could easily have turned into heavy wet blankets and caused us to resign ourselves to our “fates,” but somehow, from deep within, we each followed our juiciest interests and let curiosity lead us forward.

I was drawn to the great mysteries of life, into a study of metaphysics and psychic phenomena. Instead of heading toward business, I followed the bread crumb trail of my artistic interests into fine arts, design, and writing. Eventually the urge to penetrate into life’s underbelly, and the creative urge to be innovative, solve problems, and communicate what I was seeing, merged and I realized I really wanted to be a Spiritual Teacher! I announced this to my parents in my early twenties and their eyeballs rolled back in their heads. So different from what they had hoped!

Meanwhile, my sister followed her interests, too. She studied nutrition and science and was so fascinated with these subjects that she continued on doggedly to get her master’s degree, then her Ph.D. So much for not being smart enough! She proceeded to start her own business, which became quite successful. Little did my parents suspect that *she* would be the one to follow in our father’s footsteps! The Real Self has a plan and knows how to materialize it.

The Hero’s—and Heroine’s—Journey

In the mythological Hero’s Journey, the classic tale of the search for Self, we are drawn toward adventure, a struggle against obstacles, and a desire to do something difficult. We emerge transformed—having faced monsters—and become more of ourselves through courageous action, which often benefits our community. It’s true—we often face challenges in youth and if we engage with them head on, we discover our “character.” Every time we do it, we like ourselves more.

It is typically the hero’s—or heroine’s—faith in Self, rather than an external power, that determines success. Heroes often change the rules to win on their own terms. In the Broadway musical *Wicked*, the heroine’s song, “Defying Gravity,” declares her break from the expectations of others and how she charts her own path to her vision.

The male Hero’s Journey is well-known. Just follow Harry Potter through his trials and tribulations, or watch Forrest Gump keep on as he naively steps into his humble magnificence.



Watch Luke Skywalker and Neo (from *The Matrix*) become masterful. The male path focuses on finding heart and soul through isolation.

The Heroine’s Journey is different. Even though Wonder Woman, Electra, Supergirl, and Spiderwoman parallel the male heroic warrior-alone-against-evil model, in general, women find Self by working cooperatively with others. They achieve triumphs and endure hardships by joining *with* the world. Look at Katniss Everdeen of *The Hunger Games*. She puts family first. She speaks truth to power, calling out corruption. She doesn’t want fame; she’s self-sufficient, intelligent, and knows she can’t do everything alone.

The Hero’s or Heroine’s Journey can be a coming of age process, but it actually continues through-

out life as you discover more of who you really are. There's always more of the Real You to be revealed—and being real is the magnet that draws more soul into the world.

Victims and Narcissists

It's important to learn to feel the difference between authentic people and those who form identities to cope with insecurity. We all experience painful things growing up, but if we avoid facing, understanding, and eliminating these “monsters,” we can become captives of the wet blanket syndrome. Some people become resigned *victims* (not enough sense of self)—and some fight by creating situations where the world obeys their wishes. This is *narcissism* (an over inflated sense of self). If you become entangled in relationships with either victims or narcissists, you will find yourself being controlled.

I want to focus particularly on understanding narcissism because it's so rampant today. You probably know some narcissists, and if you don't, just look at our political leaders. At their core, narcissists feel abandoned, so they try to feel safe in a hostile world by being superior to others. They work at being smart, athletic, good-looking, powerful, sexy, charming, and the best at what they do. They brag about themselves. People envy them and put them on a pedestal, or fear them. Invulnerability is their constant goal. Victims, of course, do the opposite, bragging about how powerless they are.


Narcissists charm others to become infatuated and attached to them. They want people around who agree with their worldview—so they can feel comfortable. *Feeling their own definition of who they are prevents anxiety.* They want devotion and become upset if anyone questions them or has a different point of view. When that happens, they try to entice people back into align-

ment, and if that doesn't work, they can go ballistic and attack, trying to force compliance through belittling or threats. If that doesn't work, they cut others off cold-heartedly without another thought.

Victims and narcissists have a too-limited or too-inflated sense of the Real Self.

Narcissists don't really experience love or compassion—they think love means *agreement*. It's difficult to get through to narcissists or to help them. They aren't open to growth because they're always right. If narcissists get to a point where they can't *make* others agree with them, they often have no sense of self left, and unfortunately, the result can be suicide. The same sort of manipulation is found with victims, but their form of dominance is *passive aggression*, where they pretend to be helpless while controlling you. You're responsible for making them feel better, but they never really let help in. The best you can do in relationships with narcissists and victims is be authentic and refuse to be manipulated.

If you've had a difficult upbringing, consider embarking on your own Hero's or Heroine's Journey into your deeper nature. Confront the monsters, find the causes of your fears, be honest and vulnerable, ask for help, and make sense of the lies you may have bought into. There's nothing wrong with you! Your Real Self is always within, waiting patiently to be invited into action. You can recognize this True You because it never says *should, have to, or yes, but*—it always says, *I'm interested in, I like, I love*. It speaks in the present tense and responds open-mindedly instead of reacting. When you relax and be quiet, and smile a little smile, it has a chance to emerge.

A black and white portrait of Penney Peirce, a woman with long blonde hair, smiling at the camera.

Penney Peirce is an articulate and accurate clairvoyant empath, visionary, and author of ten books on the topics of intuition development, inner energy dynamics, expanded perception, and personal transformation. She coaches business and government leaders, psychologists, scientists, celebrities, and those on a spiritual path about the hidden dynamics of what makes for true success. Her books include *Transparency* (out 10/10/17), *Leap of Perception*, *Frequency*, and *The Intuitive Way*.