

Deepening Self Awareness

The Mental Self

The mental aspect of yourself concerns your thoughts and your imagination. Like the physical and emotional feelings, thoughts also have to capacity to come upon you without your control, but it is far easier to consciously change your thoughts, especially when you practice being more aware of them in the first place. When people think, they often think in sentences or words, but just as often, they can think in images or words and phrases that act as a kind of shorthand. In these moments, it is quite easy for thoughts to get distorted and not accurately reflect a true situation.

Mindfulness

While mindfulness began as a Buddhist concept, it has since been developed as a practice in psychology that has helped numerous people deal with crippling anxiety, depression, drug addiction, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Being mindful is not simply living in the present but a way of concentrating on aspects of the present moment you normally take for granted. Buddhists use the term “monkey mind” to describe how our brains tend to barrage us with thoughts about the past, the present, and the future constantly. Becoming mindful means to become both aware of the movement of your thoughts and emotions and to become detached from them. This detachment allows you to focus through your true self rather than seeing yourself as thoughts thinking or emotions feeling. Practicing mindfulness meditation is the first step towards becoming mindful throughout every moment of your life.

Validity of Emotions

You might have heard it said that all emotions are valid, but what exactly does this mean? Does this mean that any time you feel an emotion you are perfectly justified in feeling an emotion? For example, if your child spills a glass of milk, does the validity of emotions mean you are correct in being angry with your child? Perhaps the notion of correct versus incorrect is the wrong approach. The validity of emotions means that in any situation, if you feel anger, regardless of the cause, it is valid to acknowledge to yourself that you do indeed feel anger. The validity of emotions means that denying an emotional state is a dangerous action that can have big consequences, often resulting in an emotional breakdown in the future if not addressed.