

How to do Introspection

by

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Introspection Abused

Of all the tools utilized in the search for Self, that of Introspection is perhaps the most widely misused.

People tend to use introspection essentially for trivial matters, such as which type of shirt or blouse to wear, which sort of perfumed toilet paper to buy, or which words to murmur to one's lover? The abuse possibilities are boundless.

All self-seekers should understand that Introspection is a delicate, Olympian instrument requiring constant nurturing. Would you use a thousand dollar note to wipe your nose? Normally not. So then why use precious introspection in the same manner, such as when thinking about the evening meal? How many times have you spent time considering, "Hamburgers are all very well and fine, but what about pork chops?... And

the merits of roast chicken are not to be sniffed at..."? *This is a shallow waste of introspection.* Hell, stick with the hamburgers!

The introspection tool can go flaccid with such banal overuse. After a day of introspection wasted on what tie to wear or which pair of shoes goes with which belt, *how* can you believe that after returning home and eating your hamburgers or pork chops you can begin a serious session of introspection? The tool has become completely sapped of its energy and life force.

If you insist on using introspection in this manner, and one day when you really need to know who you are, the only answer you'll find will be Mashed potatoes.

The solution to this is easy peasy. The majority of your daily decisions should be made using your *impulses*. That's why Nature evolved them. Impulses are for essentially superficial activities, such as eating, lovemaking, creating art, vacuuming the rug or office work. Whereas introspection is for your soul. Your very soul¹.

Approaching Introspection

You must not be brusque with Introspection. By nature it is a somewhat anxious, distressed entity. Introspection needs to be treated gingerly, with good preparation for its use made well in advance, at least one-hour minimum, but three hours are preferable.

¹ Really, I can't make it any plainer than that.

Such preparations are performed by repeating to yourself, "I am going to wonder who-I-am and what-it's-all-about in three hours time." This way the tool becomes well lubricated before use. It is highly recommended that you remind yourself of the forthcoming coming introspection session, say, every ten to fifteen minutes²

There remains a hard-core school of so-called mental health experts who promote the notion that the act of introspection is best done on the spur of the moment, as when one suddenly for no reason at all, "falls into thought". This is basically an amateurish attitude and will get you nowhere, at least nowhere you really want to go.

Depth in introspection is a holistic concept, which should not be confused with the Holly Concept, which is usually only done on Christmas Eve, among relatives, before an open fire, and is not usually illegal. True Depth, however, as a holistic concept, is perfectly legal if done between consenting adults, although it has been known on occasion to corrupt minors. But that's the chances you take.

To sum up: Introspection is a skittish instrument, to be approached with understanding, a kind look, and inquiring politely as to its health. You should never launch yourself at it brutishly: "Okay, gimme an insight!" Introspection will tend to just shrivel up employing such brutal methods.

² Naturally, all preparatory phrases should be repeated silently, as befits introspection. It has been proven that if others nearby hear you repeat such phrases as "Introspection will

Historical Roots

The history of Introspection tends to have intense periods where a great deal of Introspection took place, such as during the Renaissance or whenever interest in organized religion began to flag. On the other hand, there have been times when hardly anyone thought, such as the Middle Ages or the beginning of this book.

Formal Introspection was first proposed by one Pious the Backward in the Court of Eleanor the Snooze near Gibraltar around the time the swallows came back once and for all. Pious the Backward stated, "God hath given us a tool by which we may ask, *Why?* Unfortunately, he did not include a mental tool which adequately answers this *Why?* Usually we simply respond, *Why not?* Which is self-evidently insufficient, not to mention just a tad disappointing. *Why* needs further in-depth consideration." This convinced Queen Eleanor the Snooze of the worthiness of his ideas, and awarded Pious the Backward a ten year grant in *Why Research*, research that has evolved to its present state of activity, where many tenured academics in *Why* receive many different grants³.

commence in 45 minutes, 25 seconds", your social life will tend to take a wicked plunge, and your mental health becomes suspect. This is due to general *Introspection Ignorance*.

³ Interestingly, no one has ever satisfactorily answered *Why* for good and all. It has merely been bureaucratized into a lucrative careerism by creating numerous offshoots and in general avoiding the answer by creating new problems. And why not?

Introspection Generally

Introspection is a specific tool used for the specific purpose of General Knowledge of One's Innermost Being, or Who You Are—whichever comes first. Its width and breathe are astounding, especially if you're sitting down and looking up.

Techniques for Introspection

Introspection, it bears repeating, should be approached from the outside in. Rare is the case where one starts from one's innermost being and works toward a shallower understanding of oneself.

So, let's actually do some introspection. Let us assume you are sitting and things are quiet. You have had time to yourself and are not expecting any urgent interruptions. I shall also assume that your approach has been orthodox—you've been quiet, friendly, yet firm with your introspection—your three-hour introductory comments have relaxed you for forthcoming search for self.

You begin your first descent into innermost being by applying a Zen technique known as *know-nothing*. You do this by emptying your mind of everything and seeing what's left. If there is truly nothing there, you may assume you've successfully arrived at the First Level of Introspection.

To arrive at the Second Level of Introspection, you must now introduce a thought, otherwise you risk one of two things occurring: you will either become bored or fall asleep. So, introduce a thought. Carrots, for

instance. (Granted, carrots are not, in and of themselves, a very appealing topic, but they do have their uses, such as being considered excellent brain food, and they have that nice non-threatening bunny color about them. In any case, do utilize a somewhat sedate and unintoxicating subject, for the brain's deeper, energetic faculties must be kept for the Third Level.)

Once past carrots (or any other fruit or vegetable), one enters the Third Level, and this is where things really start popping. Here, certain individuals may commence to hallucinate weirdly and this alarming state should be combated by taking two aspirins immediately and returning to the carrot state until the condition stabilizes.

Other individuals may see flashes of light which are commonly referred to as *flashes of light*. This is a good sign. Keep watching. Many times flashes of light turn into flashes of insight, and hence a great deal of valuable groundwork is being done here.

Once you have collected at least five flashes of insight *minimum* (or twenty-five flashes of light, convertible), you may now descend to the fourth and final level of Introspection, commonly referred to as Timelessness, or a metaphysical type of catnap.

Rare is the case where you will encounter yourself in all your naked glory the first time at this level; but if you do, don't panic or be shocked: many people look this way in the timelessness state. In any event, you may be surprised at the unexpected things that come to mind (I know I was).

The length of time spent at this depth is variable, depending on the individual's experience and ambitions. Be advised not to find too much of yourself at one time; leave some over for subsequent journeys to your soul.

Once you're satisfied about who you are—or just plain sick and tired—wave goodbye and get out of yourself. Unlike the slow, delicate descent into Introspection, resurfacing is much easier. All you have to do is open your eyes. If the result is not completely satisfactory and you still have vague flashes of insight or crave carrots, go to the kitchen and wash a utensil, or feed a pet, play a tune on the harmonica, something manual and down to earth. The effect is usually swift and effective.

Upon returning to normalcy, you may assess your work for the day, and who you are, and be proud. This concludes your voyage of Introspection, and is appropriately called *A Fulfilling Experience Requiring Endless Repetition*.