

The Higher Self

LBeall, PhD, 2008

I will not forget my introduction to the Higher Self. In 1986, I was working at a Regional Medical Center in the Behavior Medicine Unit. I had been working with a client unsuccessfully. Nothing I did or she did made a difference in changing her condition and I was feeling desperate. I was having her go through a visualization when it occurred to me she may have some kind of resource within her that could help her resolve the real issues so she could move forward with her life. What I said to her was “As you go down this path you will round a bend and there in the clearing will be a strong, wise part of you that will tell you what you need to know at this time.” A minute or so later she said, “Okay, she’s here now what?” I was surprised. I mean, to be honest, I made this up like a Hail Mary pass. I said, “Well, talk with her and see what she says.” When their conversation was done she told me what she said, and I suggested it would be a good idea to implement her ideas and come back in a week to tell me about it. She applied what her Higher Self recommended and the results were positive. She started moving in the right direction with her life and her therapy with me came to an end fairly soon after that. I have been helping my clients turn to the Inner Helper ever since, with encouraging results.

I suppose I should have tried to publish this finding. Others have, as books have been written about this wonderful inner resource we humans have. Many names have been given to this resource: Infinite Self, Higher Self, Inner Self-Helper, Sacred Self, Wise Guide, True Being, Wise Counselor, The Conscience, True Self, The Self, Inner Teacher, Invisible Self, Inner Helper, and the Helper. These names convey an important truth: *Each of us have within us a personal guide and teacher that will help us through life.* I feel confident my clients are prepared to end treatment when they have learned to trust and follow this Inner Helper. Those of you with a spiritual orientation may ask, “Shouldn’t God be the only one we trust like that?” Of course, but could it be this Inner Resource is a spark of the divine, a link to God? The two influences seem inseparable, and following one leads to the other.

I believe this part of us is found in all cultures. For example, at the very center of Medicine Wheels used by Native Americans is the Spiritual Center with a Mother Earth and a Father Sky with whom we connect.

Learning to live from this Center is the quest of a lifetime. I have been told by those who tried to live by this stronger part of them, it is worth the effort. They found a sense of strength, peace, confidence, and happiness they did not know was possible before. You too will discover you can achieve things you never thought possible, when drawing on the inner resources of your Higher Self. When you start living from your Center, the world opens doors of opportunities that were previously closed.

At this point you may be thinking, “Wait a minute, aren’t you just talking about becoming religious? I want nothing to do with religion.” Being religious and being true to your Self are not the same thing. We’re not talking about putting on a nice dress and going to church. We are talking about being genuine with yourself, respecting yourself enough to be real from your Deepest, Highest Self. When you relate to others from your

Highest Self you treat them with respect. Not everyone who is religious does that, and there are those who aren't religious who do. The bottom line is character, not church attendance.

Suggestions for Working with the Higher Self (HS):

1. Remove the obstacles to working with your Higher Self: You don't have to be without emotional obstacles or problems to work with your Higher Self. In fact, your Higher Self will help you overcome these. But there are some obstacles that can be a source of interference, and these are the ones we will address.

One of these obstacles is physical pain. It is common for trauma survivors to have physical pain. One of the reasons for this is because the inner stress trauma causes is converted into pain in all the systems of the body, depending on genetic vulnerabilities. Our pain can absorb our attention to the point we can't focus in a way to connect with our Higher Self. In this section you will find the paper "Dealing with Pain," to help you with this obstacle. If you are having difficulty letting go of emotional pain, the handout "Why People Don't Let Go of Pain," may help you identify reasons you are having difficulty letting go of emotional pain.

Another reason people are unable to connect to their Higher Self is they are unable to remain focused. This could be a symptom of Attention Deficit Disorder. I recommend Homeopathy for this problem in addition to some adjustments in nutrition. Homeopathy is a system of medical practice that treats physical, mental, and emotional conditions by administering minute doses of a remedy that would in larger amounts produce in healthy persons symptoms similar to those of the disorder being treated. (Definition adapted from Merriam-Webster). See the paper "Natural Serotonin" for a discussion of some of the nutritional and behavioral activities you can do that would benefit attention deficit symptoms, as well as anxiety and depression.

Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder are also a common source of interfering with the Higher Self. That is the main reason working with your Higher Self is the last step in the 8 Session Model. By the time you arrive at Session 8, many of the PTSD symptoms you have experienced will be diminished, and access to your Higher Self will be easier.

2. Draw on the Universal Source of Energy: This is the energy or light that pervades all space, sustaining life, enlightening the mind, and energizing the mind and body. Some call this energy Chi, the Animating Force, Spirit, the Light, or the Source. As you work with the Higher Self you will align yourself to be more receptive to this energy. As you learn to draw on this energy you will see areas of your life expand, including your creativity, relationships, personal power to do good, and connection to God.

Practical Exercise: Increase your physical energy naturally without chemicals like caffeine. Ways to do this include healthy foods, herbs, exercise, and sunshine. Learn to intersperse activities in your day that generate positive energy. For example, spending time with positive people, enjoying wholesome activities, stimulating reading, and meditation all generate positive energy

3. Cultivate a Sense of Appreciation, Awe and Connection to Nature and Those Around You: As you work towards staying connected with your Higher Self your awareness of and response to Nature and others will increase. You will become more attuned to the Light and Energy that connects all the elements of creation. You will feel the Love that is inseparable from and an extension of the Universal Light. By the same token, as you experience this universal connection you will likewise be more connected to your own Higher Self.

Practical Exercise: The universe is infinitely large and infinitely small. If you can gain an appreciation for both the macro and the micro you will notice many amazing things around you that benefit you. Macro Appreciation would include the landscape, the mountains, lakes, clouds, space, and perspectives that take in the larger view of things. Micro Appreciation would be flowers, birds, insects, a leaf, a rock and perspectives that take in the magnificence in the tiny.

4. Learn to Yield to the Light and Energy that Sustains All of Life: It has been said the first half of our lives is spent trying to gain control and the second half is spent realizing we don't have any control. I have lived long enough to realize my life goes better when I relinquish my personal control to God. Ultimately, I don't have any control anyway. As you work with your HS you will better understand that personal desires and wants are often superseded by a higher wisdom, a better way. Your tendency to pursue selfish aims will be expanded to include larger circles of concern.

Practical Exercise. Meditate on how you are living life. Are there areas where you are trying to maintain control that would be better released? By way of illustration, breathe slow and deeply and as you exhale through your mouth say "I release my need to control my relationship with _____," (or a negative emotion or undesirable situation, etc.)

5. Become more humble and teachable: Related to #4 is the notion of being open to new information and perspectives, not having to be right, and not considering yourself better than others.

Practical Exercise. In terms of knowledge, consider how little you know. Some of the most humble individuals are those who have amassed great knowledge of a certain subject over a lifetime and understand how little they actually know compared to the vast amount of information there is to learn. When relating to another, imagine what he will be like in 1000 years from now. He will continue to learn, evolve and grow in many ways, and will become a magnificent human being, even more than he already is.

6. Meditate. Find a quiet place. Try to quiet the noise inside. Make the internal as well as external quiet. This may be difficult for you but it is worth the effort. Focus on your breathing. As you do, you may begin to notice a place that feels like your center, your deepest self. Some have described this center as a ball of light. It is usually in the region of the heart. Philosophers have called this part of the human by many names. I prefer the name, "Higher Self." Throughout history the Higher Self has been sought when extremely difficult things were required. This is where a mother turns to find strength to care for an infant when she is exhausted. This is where a warrior turns to for courage to win a battle or to rescue a fellow wounded comrade. This is the place firemen and rescue

workers go to draw strength to save others. This is where an individual goes to protect someone he or she does not know. Men and women have gone there to face impossible odds, to fight a formidable adversary. The Higher Self is where one can go to find the greatest strength and power to face enormous challenges in life, including obstacles in relationships, work, sports, battles, or climbing mountains,

Practical Exercise: Take five minutes. Find a comfortable place to sit and rest your hands naturally on your lap. Follow your breathing. When intruding thoughts come, as they will, accept them and let them pass. Just keep your thoughts on your breathing. There are many places you can go from there, but that's a good place to start.

7. Evaluate your values and priorities in relation to your roles in life. The ISH is more concerned with being than doing or having. When we experience "being" energy we approach life, people and problems from a higher and broader perspective. We are focused on bringing to bear our Self on the present moment, and are not distracted by past or future concerns.

Practical Exercise: Initially take a minute several times before noon and several times after noon to tap into your being energy in the present, without thoughts about doing or having. This may take the form of a brief meditation.

Inner Self-Helper in Therapy The phenomena of the ISH (Conflict Free Inner Resource) was first reported by Allison (1974) and has been widely observed and utilized therapeutically (Comstock, 1987). Although ego states born of trauma are not usually thought of as resources for ego-strengthening, ego-state therapists are aware that they are veritable cornucopias of resources at every stage of therapy. One source of their strength is that ego states formed at the time of trauma not only hold the negative traumatic material, but also frequently contain resources that were available before, during, and after the trauma. The ISH is above the traumatic experiences the patient has been through and is invaluable as an observer, source of strength, wisdom and perspective, and a companion to the frequently lonely traumatized patient.

In the process of continued growth they often hold the key resource to the success of therapy: the ability to form the therapeutic alliance. *What characteristics in the therapist would be helpful in working with the ISH?*

Turn to your Higher Self to Deal with Life's Challenges.