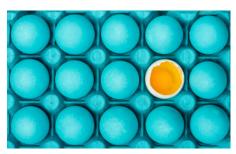


As a Christian, Should You Just "Be Yourself"?

<u>1 Corinthians 15:10</u>: (NASB) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain....



"Just be yourself, no one can ask any more of you than that." This is such free and easy advice - someone has probably said it to you and you have probably said it to someone else. But what does it mean? Is being yourself just reacting to whatever comes your way with a knee-jerk impulse? Does being yourself mean your personal preferences and feelings should be stated and followed? Do each of us have different selves that we can be? And what about Christians? Are we even supposed to be ourselves? Is our call to Christ a "leave

it all behind" call, or is it a "take it with you and we will build on it" call? How do we better understand and apply our best selves to our Christian walk?

To try and come up with one comprehensive definition of what it means to "be yourself" would be silly, because many would inevitably and justifiably see the matter from different perspectives. We will therefore approach the subject by way of biblical text and observation.

<u>1 Corinthians 15:9-10</u>: (NASB) ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Paul (Saul) hunted Christians down, persecuting the church of God. One could argue that Paul was just being himself - doing what his zeal for God provoked him to do. But Paul was *not* being himself; his zeal for God was misapplied.

¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Paul said, *I am what I am*, NOT *I am what I was*. God's grace brought him to his better self - doing what his zeal, directed by God's will, provoked him to do.



DO NOT BE FOOLED INTO THINKING THAT WHAT YOU DO ALWAYS CLEARLY DEFINES YOU.

We all have sordid backgrounds when we are called to follow Christ. Saul's past actions did not define who he was.

Your brain is an artifact, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself, Intro Lecture, DrJoeDispenza

• So, your brain according to neuroscience is organized to reflect everything you know in your life. Your brain is a record of your environment. It's a record, an artifact of your past. So, if you believe this then does your environment control your thinking? Or does your thinking control your environment?





Your brain is a collection of all the things that have happened in your past. Are you a result of your environment or is your environment a result of your thinking? It is a choice. We can be along for the ride or by the grace of God, we can be driving.

Why do so many of us simply not rise up to the blessed challenge of Christianity? Because being ourselves may not let us! The challenge of Christianity is self-sacrificing, which is hard. The Parable of the Sower shows us a metaphor of four types of ground the seed (the good news of the gospel) falls upon with four different kinds of results.



They were trampled underfoot, and the birds came and ate them up:

<u>Matthew 13:19</u>: (NASB) When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

This is not just when a person does not understand intellectually; rather, something was placed in their heart they did not grab hold of. Sometimes our sense of self is cut off from growth because we are too hardened by life. Saying, "I am just being myself" is used as an excuse not to apply ourselves or to push harder. We get tired, lose confidence and are not sure about our ability to change or grow.

In the previous audio clip, Joe Dispenza said, "Are you going to follow the dictates of the environment or can you dictate the environment?"

Life's repetition, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself, Intro Lecture, DrJoeDispenza

> So, if you wake up in the morning and you get out of bed on the same exact side as you did the day before, you shut the alarm clock off with the same finger, you slip into your favorite slippers, you shuffle into the bathroom and you use the toilet like you always do, then you walk over to the mirror and you look at yourself to remember who you are, then you get into the shower and you wash yourself in the same routine way, then you groom yourself to look like what everybody expects you to look, then



you go downstairs and you drink coffee out of your favorite mug. Then you drive to work the same ways you did the day before, you see the same people that push the same emotional buttons, you do the exact thing that you know how to do and you memorized and can do so well that you're an expert at; then you hurry up and rush home so you can hurry up and check your emails, so you can hurry up and go to bed, so you can hurry up and do it all over again. Now, here's my question: Did your brain change at all that day? We could say that you were thinking the same thoughts, performing the same actions that create the same experiences, that produce the same emotions but secretly expecting something to change in your life.





Over the last week, my repetitions in life changed, not because I decided they were going to. A tornado came through our neighborhood and the devastation is hard to fathom. Trees came down and tops of trees were cut off. The storm came quickly and we were left with no power, no water since we have wells in our area, and no internet. The repetitions of life tend to change dramatically in an instant. We will touch more on this later.





Back to the parable. Seeds on rocky ground immediately sprang up because they had no depth of soil.

When the sun rose they were scorched and withered for lack of depth:

<u>Mark 4:16-17</u>: (NASB) ¹⁶In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; ¹⁷and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

Sometimes we WANT to grow and change, but we do not make room for the change to be permanent. We start out but fizzle. There are too many hard things in the way to create the change. Sometimes we want to change but get stuck.



OUR TRUE SELVES CAN EASILY BE MASKED BY LIFE'S PACE AND BY MISPLACED PRIORITIES.

We end up focusing on things that are not so important.

Being ourselves is bigger than our present-moment feelings. How do we dig down to our deeper selves?

This is where the issue begins to get confusing, because it is SO easy to label "ourselves" as the sum total of what our present experiences bring to us. It turns out that being yourself has a lot more options than just the current level of circumstances. It turns out we can really have a choice regarding the future of "us" as individuals and become much more.

The present as a placeholder, The Myth of Self-Discovery, Emily Warren, TEDx

• In my past two years of graduate school I have learned something that I think is more important and more valuable than any class you'll take as a PhD student. How many of you have ever felt the need to "find yourselves"? A lot of you. Me too. We are driven by this need, this expectation that our allimportant purpose in our adult lives is to find ourselves, that our enlightened



selves are just out there somewhere, waiting to be discovered. Well, I think that makes us treat the present moment like a placeholder.

That last line is profound! "By waiting for ourselves to be discovered, the present becomes a placeholder." It means we are just biding our time and is an excuse.



The thorns choked them out and they bore no fruit:

<u>Mark 4:18-19</u>: (NASB) ¹⁸And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, ¹⁹but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.



Sometimes our sense of ourselves diverts our focus away from higher things to things we see as pressing.

After the tornado I can relate to things we see as pressing. There is no electricity or running water, so there are pressing needs.

Do things you see as pressing overwhelm us so there is no room for anything else? Or do they become things that are simply pressing, but we make room for things that are more valuable in the long run?

I admit this past week was interesting and challenging. I am not used to fetching water or life by candlelight and flashlights!

The pressing issues of life can be a great excuse, or they can be a challenge on the road to something bigger.

Our audio clips will help show us how we think so we can be honest with ourselves and say, "I want to be myself in the best way possible." What should I do, think, do *not* do and do *not* think?

Personality creates reality, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself, Intro Lecture, DrJoeDispenza

> So, can you believe in a future that you can't see or experience with your senses yet, but you thought about enough times in your mind that your brain is literally changed to look like the event has already happened? Neuroscience says it's absolutely possible. Now, your personality creates your personal reality. That's it. It's that simple. And your personality is made up of how you think, how you act and how you feel. So, the present personality who is sitting here today - you - has created the present personal reality called "your life." Would you agree? Would you also agree, then, if you wanted to create a new personal reality that on a fundamental level you would have to change the thoughts that you were thinking, the behaviors and habits that you're demonstrating and the emotions that you've memorized that have become part of your identity? Most people try to create a new personal reality as the same personality and it never works.



That is powerful! Can you visualize a life you really cannot touch? This is what being a Christian is. Visualizing following after Christ and being Christlike is not something tangible. His point is that many of us are not willing to stretch or change the things that are making us who we are - what we think, how we act and what we feel.



They grew up and were fruitful - some 30, 60, 100-fold!

<u>Luke 8:15</u>: (NASB) But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

There is this good soil - those who receive the gospel hear it, they have that heart, they hold it, they make a place for it and give it room to expand and it begins to overwhelm them. The soil now has a purpose unlike the three previous soils.

They all had the opportunity for a purpose. In being yourself, are you going to be one of those soils that has an opportunity for purpose but does not take it?

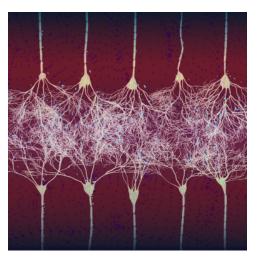


WHEN WE ACCEPT OURSELVES AS MERE PASSENGERS IN OUR EXPERIENCES, WE CAN END UP AT A DESTINATION THAT MAY NOT BE OF OUR CHOOSING.

That is not what being yourself is all about. The "good soil experience" did not accept the "passenger" status. It did not go along for the ride. "My whole reason for being now has a focus. Everything I do will be to grow the gospel." We do not want to settle for being just how we are.

Fire together/wire together, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself, Intro Lecture, DrJoeDispenza

• So, then as you keep thinking the same thoughts, performing the same actions, and living by the same experiences that produce the same emotions, there's a principle in neuroscience that says, nerve cells that fire together, wire together. If you keep repeating the same states of mind and body over and over again, your brain begins to fire in the same sequences, same patterns and same combinations. Whenever you make your brain work in a certain way, that's called "mind." Mind is the brain in action. As you remind yourself every day who you think you are, you're causing your brain



to fire in the exact same ways. As they fire and wire in the same patterns over time, the brain moves into a very finite signature, and that's called your "personality." Now that box in your brain isn't literally a box, but it's the most commonly-wired, neurologically-fired programs that run redundantly because we keep doing the same things over and over again.

"As a Christian, Should You Just "Be Yourself"? #1022 - April 16, 2018



What kinds of redundant thinking patterns are GOOD and should be kept intact as we seek to find our "best" self?

As Christians developing Christlikeness, we want to put in good habits to change who we are to who we want to *be*. Begin with the end in mind. "I want to be faithful to the Lord, so I want to do certain things to help prove my faithfulness." Some of the ingredients for good habits are prayer, meditating on answers to those prayers, studying God's word,

fellowship with the brotherhood, testifying about the experiences you are going through to get input from others, and if you are able, sing hymns throughout the day to focus on praising and honoring the Lord.

John the Baptist showed us the necessary fundamental change needed before "our self" can be successfully re-imagined.

The people heard his message but needed more guidance. John tells each group of individuals how to be their best selves:

Luke 3:10-16: (NASB) ¹⁰And the crowds were questioning him, saying, Then what shall we do? ¹¹And he would answer and say to them, The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none: and he who has food is to do likewise.

tis "better self" message: Giving self - love your neighbor as yourself.

¹²And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, Teacher, what shall we do? ¹³And he said to them, Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.

His "better self" message: Respectful self - uphold the Law, respect your neighbor as your equal.

¹⁴Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, and what about us, what shall we do? And he said to them, Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.

His "better self" message: Prideless self - use strength and power justly and contentedly.

¹⁵Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, ¹⁶John answered and said to them all, As for me, I baptize you with water; but one is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of his sandals...

His "better self" message: Open-minded self - watch and wait, for true greatness is coming.



THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR BETTER SELVES IS BIBLE-BASED PRINCIPLES.

"Being myself" is not just a destiny. There are choices.



What is the learning process of a Christian that will help them find their best "self"?

With a solid foundation of biblical principles in place, we can now focus on building our best "self." To do so requires learning, but not JUST the compiling of new and helpful information. Christian learning also requires the application of those things that will help us grow beyond our present circumstance-driven reactions to life.



The experience of myself, my wife and my mom, who lives next door, during the tornado was an experience of greatness and deliverance. My wife got home literally three minutes before the storm started. If she was in the driveway when that big tree fell and hit, it would have been over for her. The trees that fell weighed thousands of pounds and were over 80-feet tall. I believe the storm went over our house. This was blatant deliverance. It was God's tender loving care that delivered us this time.



Learn to change your mind, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself, Intro Lecture, DrJoeDispenza

> • To change your mind, then, is to make the brain work in new sequences, in new patterns, in new combinations to begin to make the brain work differently. The one ingredient that allows us to do that is knowledge or information, because every time you learn something new you make a new connection in your brain. That's what learning is. Learning is forging new connections. Remembering is maintaining or sustaining those connections. Now, every time you have a thought, you make a chemical. If you have a great thought, or an unlimited thought or a joyful thought, you turn on a set of circuits in your brain that fires in a very specific sequence pattern and combination that produces a level of mind that turns on another part of the brain that makes a chemical for you to begin to feel exactly the way you were just thinking - great or unlimited or joyful.

The process of change begins with applying new thoughts in new directions: <u>2 Peter 1:1-8</u>: (NASB) ¹Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

Peter is framing our best selves to be like him - thoroughly committed to Christ. Peter was always committed to Christ, but he had to grow into being able to live that thorough commitment.

Being thoroughly committed to Christ is a vulnerable place to be, and as a result it carries a specific gift from God:

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; ³seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.



Grace and divine power - all things needed that pertain to life and godliness. This gives our best selves a real opportunity for success!

⁴For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

But we are all afraid of something...

(1) My biggest fear, The Myth of Self-Discovery, Emily Warren, TEDx

A lot of people will talk to you about their biggest fear. I am going to tell you mine. My biggest fear is reaching the end of my life and realizing that I was never awake to any of it, never in the present moment, because I was so focused on what I should be doing or where I should be going. A life spent constantly searching for who I am supposed to be instead of learning about who I am.

(Jonathan) If you are a task-oriented person like I am, you think of all the tasks to get done and it is easy to miss everything around you. I can relate to her!

Our environmentally-driven "self" continually battles fear and failure.

Our spiritually-driven self is vital to being ourselves if we are a Christian.

We suggest a 12-step process to help you be your spiritually-driven self. Here are the first four:

- 1. Make a vow to the Lord to do His will and not your own.
- 2. Show your brethren what has taken place in your heart by the symbol of baptism full body immersion.
- 3. Put away fleshly interests and habits.
- 4. Bible study absorb the Scriptures.

With such advantages as we have been given, we can stare down our fears by applying them to our *spiritually-driven self*:

⁵Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

We need to be our highest self. Adding these qualities is the application of the knowledge necessary to reach our best "spiritual self." It is not just about being your best "self" anymore if you are a Christian; it is about being your best "spiritual self!"

⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (The key is to increase.)







CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF OUR SPIRITUALLY-DRIVEN SELF WILL CREATE A RECOGNIZABLE FIELD OF BATTLE SO THAT WE MAY CONTINUALLY CHOOSE OUR SPIRITUAL SELF OVER OUR EARTHLY SELF.

CQ Team Trish adds: Do you ever wonder why Peter says, "For this reason also, applying all diligence, add to your faith all these things...?" It struck me that if we are just to be ourselves, this isn't natural. If this was natural, we wouldn't be having this conversation. Right now, "our selves" does not go toward the upper road, it goes down the other way. When you said,

"Should we just be ourselves," who wants to be ourselves? I like what Jonathan said, "Who we are is valuable, but what we are, that's a different story."

Being a Christian is not natural or easy, but it is the most worthwhile thing you can ever embark on.

Negative thoughts, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself - Intro Lecture, DrJoeDispenza

• Now, if you have a negative thought or an unhappy thought or self-deprecating thought, you turn on a different set of circuits, and a different combination, a different sequence and a different pattern that produces a different level of mind. The brain then begins to make a different batch of chemicals that signals the body for you to begin to feel exactly the way you were just thinking - negative or unhappy or unworthy. The moment you begin to feel the way you think, because the brain is in constant communication with your body, you begin to think the way you feel, which makes more chemicals for you to feel the way you think, and then you think the way you feel, and then you feel the way you think, and then you think the way you feel... and some people do this for 20 or 30 or 40 years. Now, the redundancy of that cycle over time creates what I call a "state of being."

What are some of the best ways to combat redundancy of negative thoughts? Do not think that way! It is not profitable. We need to change our thinking, replacing it with a positive spiritual thought. We have to be constantly aware of what we are thinking. Discipline has a lot to do with it. Stop, reset and think spiritually. When you fall down, get up. When we go down roads that bring us back to our earthly self, we need to reconnect with our spiritual selves!

<u>1 Corinthians 10:13</u>: (NASB) No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Being a Christian means the parameters of being yourself are now different.



Should we as Christians institute the changes to be our Christian selves or wait for God to do it for us?

This presents a question, as our desire for that spiritual self can put us in a position of trying to fit into a maturity level we may not be ready for or fit for. Spiritual mindedness is not a buffet line of character traits and wisdom; rather, it is a production and assembly line of Christlike character and maturity. Focus on being your Christlike-self.



(1) Thoughts, feelings/state of being, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself - Intro Lecture, DrJoeDispenza

A state of being is when your mind and body are working together or your • thoughts and feelings are aligned to a concept. Thoughts are the language of the brain, and feelings are the language of the body. As people get caught in this cycle of thinking and feeling, and feeling and thinking, over time they condition their body to memorize that emotion as well as the conscious mind. Whenever the body knows as well as the mind, that's called a "habit." A habit is when your body is the mind. Now, 95% of who you are by the time you're 35 years old is a set of memorized behaviors, set of emotional reactions, beliefs, attitudes, that run just like a computer program.

Our habits can be great and they can be disastrous.

Mark 14:26-31: (NASB) After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus is literally on his way to the place of his betrayal and the beginning of his night of trial and he gently warns his friends:

²⁷And Jesus said to them, You will all fall away, because it is written, I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. ²⁸But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of vou to Galilee.

While the warning was gentle it was also firm. The sheep shall be scattered because prophecy must be fulfilled.

²⁹But Peter said to him, Even though all may fall away, yet I will not. ³⁰And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny me three times.

Jesus is brutally honest and specific with Peter, but Peter's vision of himself stifled his own ability to hear.

³¹But Peter kept saying insistently, Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you! And they all were saying the same thing also.

Peter's intention was to stay with the Lord, but he was not able to recognize the difference between his potential and his capacity. Peter was warned and then shown what would happen. He failed. He was later forgiven and this all led to his spiritual self, becoming capable of leading the flock. The weakness of his earthly self had to be exposed so the strength of his spiritual self could be built. Some of the hardest experiences we go through cause the biggest changes for spiritual growth in our lives.





SOMETIMES WHAT WE THINK WE ARE IS SIMPLY A PERSONAL POTENTIAL THAT IS YET TO BE DEVELOPED.

Continuing with the 12-step process to help you be your spiritually-driven self:

- 5. Observe and learn from the experience of others.
- 6. Look for opportunities to serve and help the brotherhood.
- 7. Ask questions. Look to soak up knowledge.
- 8. Study topically to understand better.

(I)) Walking the path, The Myth of Self-Discovery, Emily Warren, TEDx

• There is a beautiful wilderness trail here in Claremont - we call it the Wilderness Loop. Just a short time ago, I went on a hike with a friend. We spent hours trekking up and down those dusty hills, but afterward I couldn't remember any of it. Not the sights, not sounds, not the smells. I had been so fixated on myself, worrying if I was on the right path in life. And where did I end up? At the end of the path, right back where I had started.





whether or not the things we are capable of are really within our capacity or if they are simply a wish for our best self? With God's help, we can do anything. When I was given this crazy idea to start a Christian talk program over 20 years ago, I thought wow, what a great idea! Was I capable? NO WAY! Did I pursue it anyway? Yes, and for a good reason. To bring praise, honor and glory to my

Heavenly Father. Sometimes we need to put ourselves out there. With the help and co-laboring of others, it was possible. There is no way I could have



done it alone. When we discussed it and started working together, by God's grace, He helped us do this.

Now Christian Questions is made up of a large team of volunteers from many different countries who contribute to help us share the gospel.



If we do not have the ability for something, pass it on to someone who does.

Superiority, inferiority, interiority, The Art of Being Yourself, Caroline McHugh, TEDx

• You're very familiar with the superiority complex. If you have a superiority complex you pretty much think you're the most important person in the room. If you've got an inferiority complex you suffer from an over-modest self-regard. Now these are both signs of a fragile ego. One of them is about delusions of grandeur and the other one delusions of



insignificance. There's a third way of being in the world, and I call it "interiority;" this is one of my made-up words. So, the word "interiority" describes a particular disposition, and there are two reasons it might be useful to you. Number one, it's completely uncomparative. If you have a superiority complex or an inferiority complex, you need other people around. For a superiority complex you need other people to be smaller. For an inferiority complex you need to suffer from the I'mgoing-to-be-found-out syndrome, so somebody needs to find you out. Interiority is entirely unrelative, so to operate from this position of interiority, it's like a perceptual vantage point. It's a sensibility. It's an orientation. And it's the only place in your life, the only place in your life you have no competition.

To "be yourself" you need to have an "interiority complex." Have no competition with anybody - just focus on being your best self. Christians are called out to be our highest spiritual self.

<u>Romans 12:3-8</u>: (NASB) ³For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Notice - *not to think more highly of yourself* - think equitably of ourselves. Finding our TRUE spiritual self depends on it. Not giving ourselves more credit and not giving ourselves enough credit for what God called us to. If God called you, there is something there and that is the person you should be. However, you do not stay there; you grow.

⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.



FOR OUR BEST SPIRITUAL SELVES TO DEVELOP WE NEED TO ENTIRELY DITCH THE IDEA OF COMPETING WITH ONE ANOTHER AND FOCUS ON FINDING OUR PLACE OF CONTRIBUTION.



"Being yourself" is about change. What drives this change in the right direction?

There are several driving forces for the change that we want to see in our lives to get to our best spiritual selves. As we have seen, there are some parts of life that need to come along and there are parts of life that need to be abandoned. Courage is the order of the day as we proceed.

(1)) The challenge of changing, Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself, Intro Lecture DrJoeDispenza

• Five percent of your conscious mind begins to work against 95 percent of what you've memorized. The person wants to think positively, but they're feeling negatively. They want to create their dreamboard, put up their future life, but they feel unworthy. That's mind and body in opposition. We have to recondition the body to a mnemonic. How many people here know someone who's memorized suffering? Doesn't have to be you, it could be anybody. And you say to that person, "Hey, did you read that book I gave you?" What do they say? "No." "Did you see the DVD I gave you?" "Oh, no." "Hey, listen, we're going to go out to dinner, we're going to go see some stand up comedy, we're going to go for a walk along the water. Want to come?" "No." What are they saying? I'm insisting on this neurochemical order that no person, no thing, no experience can move us from it.

Here is where we find our new spiritual self:

First, there is the matter of how we see one another:

<u>2 Corinthians 5:16-18</u>: (NASB) ¹⁶Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.

Do not look at others according to the flesh. We should see the brotherhood through eyes of spirituality.

Because our sight is now striving to be spiritually driven we can now embrace our new spiritual self:

¹⁷Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Continuing with the 12-step process to help you be your spiritually-driven self:

- 9. Study the Bible by topic.
- 10. Use Bible study helps.
- 11. Participate in Bible studies.
- 12. Share the "Good News" with others.
- 13. Keep learning keep growing.

Each one of these practical steps has one common denominator: humility.



(I)) Perception and approval addiction, *The Art of Being Yourself*, *Caroline McHugh*, *TEDx*

• The most visible "you" that you represent to the outside world is what everybody else thinks of you, and there are as many opinions of you as there are people. I want you to imagine you're like a big USB stick that you plug into the world. You show up on the desktop of the world. And that's the



power of context. If you don't understand that bit, being yourself can be an ill-advised strategy. So of course, it's important that you understand perception. There are very few things that I think are gender-specific, but one of them is something I call "approval addiction." The need to be liked, the need for approbation, or recognition, or for somebody to tell you it's okay. I find more women suffer from that affliction than men, and I think it's one of the most debilitating things. When it comes to being yourself needing other people's approval, loving somebody else's opinion, and mistaking it for your own is one of the most debilitating things you'll do on the road to being yourself. You will never, ever be perception-less, but it's important to be perception-free.

The need for approval can mess up our striving to be our highest spiritual self.

The ONLY approval that matters is from God through Christ! I am privileged to be me:

<u>1 Corinthians 12:20-25</u>: (NASB) ²⁰But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Is my best self in line with simply seeing value in myself and all those around me?

²²On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, ²⁴whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, ²⁵so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

Everyone is important in the body of Christ. There is no need to worry about being acceptable. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body.



OUR VALUE IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON GOD'S ASSESSMENT AND NOTHING ELSE.

This is GOOD news, as HE knows our frame and wants only what is best for us. Only God's judgment matters.

This is a most unnatural change for it is formatting a spiritual mind within an earthly body. It is a battle.



(I)) We need grit, The Myth of Self-Discovery, Emily Warren, TEDx

Here are the skills that I think are critical to taking charge of who you are and where you're going. We need grit. Grit is a concept developed by Dr. Angela Duckworth from the University of Pennsylvania. Grit is the tenacity to keep going in the face of challenge. It is the humility to admit that this is really hard, and we are not going to be good at all of it.

We need spiritual grit.

Time to hone in on getting our focus and discipline right...

First let's focus:

<u>Romans 8:31-36</u>: (NASB) ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered him over for us all, how will He not also with him freely give us all things? ³³Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

(I)) We need tolerance, The Myth of Self-Discovery, Emily Warren, TEDx

• We need tolerance. Being okay with not knowing if this is what you should be doing, not knowing exactly where we're going, but being confident in our ability to make it work. The next time you find yourself struggling with a decision or worrying if you're on the right path, I want you to get your grit on. Be tolerant with yourselves. Let go of the expectation that you need to find yourselves or figure things out perfectly, right here, right now.

Be tolerant with yourself because you are not perfect.

Now the discipline - the fight for our true spiritual selves is worth it!

³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶Just as it is written, for your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

It takes discipline to read that Scripture and say, "This applies to me. This applies to me being my highest spiritual self." It is not about staying where you are, it is about leaving where you are.



CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY -BE YOUR BEST SPIRITUAL SELF!

Be the 'self' God is calling you to be.

So, as a Christian, should you just "be yourself"? For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions... Think about it...!





Join us next week for our podcast on May 28, 2018: Is Israel a Thorn in the Side of the World?

Bonus Material!

My life IS my Message – Ghandi

1 Corinthians 12:12-31: (NASB) ¹²For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot says, Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear says, Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. ¹⁹If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³ and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, ²⁴whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? ³⁰All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? ³¹But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

(Source: WikiHow) "How to Find Yourself"

"To find yourself first learn about yourself." Finding the real you is an enlightening experience. You become self-sufficient and do things for yourself, for once. It's a hard feeling to put into words, but when you don't know who you are, it's hard to ignore. Finding yourself is not easy, but it's worth it. Ready? Let's begin.

1. Create your own life timeline. Write down all of your major goals that you feel you have achieved and want to achieve. In turn, write down the events in your life that have already happened and that have shaped or affected you. When life brings problems or misfortunes it shapes our belief system and makes us think differently, but it also makes us, us. These things you list are organically you, not a simple reflection of society.



- This isn't an exercise in wallowing. It's about clarification and identification of issues. These issues might be keeping you from reaching your present potential and letting your true self blossom.
- Spend a little time clarifying the past in your timeline. A timeline is an incredibly objective method for marking down past occurrences in your life that you consider to be major. You can look at them as formation blocks and as changing experiences along your timeline without imbuing them with too much emotion (as would occur within a diary account). As if writing a résumé, keep it simple, real, and condensed to the major effects or lessons learned from each past incident.

When analyzing negative past experiences, focus on what you learned from them. Everyone has these blips in their timeline but exaggerating or ignoring them won't help you. Instead, recognize that these experiences shaped you.

2. Distinguish your thoughts from the thoughts of others. For most people (it's more common than you may think) life is pretty easy to go through while on autopilot; we practically get handed a road map for how reality "works." Go to school, get a job, get married, think this, that, and the other, and boom — hope you had a good time. And that's all well and good — it gets the job done certainly — but it doesn't allow room for you. So sit down with yourself. At the end of the timeline, come up with a few beliefs of yours that aren't based on logic, but are based on what you've been told. We all have them. Now, what do you actually think?

 Society has a very covert way of handing us the "misfits," condemning the "losers," idolizing the "beautiful," alienating the "strange." But here's a heads up: These describing words have no basis in reality. How do you feel about the world around you? Think about what you believe to be good and bad — not what anyone else has told you.

Feel free to think more concretely. Do you actually agree with your parents' political or religious affiliations? Is having a career really the most important thing to you? Do thick, black glasses really make you feel "cooler?" If the answer is no, great! There's absolutely zero problems with not molding yourself to pre-existing norms. Now all you have to do is unlearn and then relearn. Only this time, relearn based on your gut.

3. Start relying on yourself. Confidence and reliance are at the heart of finding yourself. If you don't have a solid sense of self-worth, you'll listen to what others have to say all the time and to be swayed by their insistence on what is appropriate. Learn to believe in yourself and trust your own feelings. Then, you'll come up with a structure to base your new sense of self on. Remember, be patient with yourself and confident in your abilities. Everything will come with time.

- If you have been victimized in the past, confront these issues. They're not going to go away on their own. They might be coloring your approach to daily life, causing you to live up to other people's expectations instead of your own.
- Start trusting your own judgment and decision-making processes, mistakes and all. We all make mistakes, but through mistakes we find ourselves growing, learning, and reaching our real selves.

Start taking responsibility for budgeting, household matters, and planning about the future. People who lack a sense of self tend to disregard the "details" of life with a carefree attitude, believing that things will all sort themselves out. But things don't always sort themselves out. Taking responsibility pulls you back from the precipice and lets you be self-reliant and selfdetermined, no longer carried along by the waves of fate.

4. Prepare to begin again with a clean slate. Develop your own moral conduct and practice sticking to it. Start by overcoming bad habits.

• Stop smoking, over-eating, and abusive drinking. These are examples of lapses or habits that will prevent you from functioning at your peak. They also let you "off the hook" by sidestepping the analysis of why you use these crutches instead of finding better ways to brighten your life.



This step may take some major rehabilitation for some individuals but putting it into the toohard basket won't make it go away. Remember, you can't drive your life forward if you are always gazing through your rear-view mirror!

5. Organize your world. You may find that having all your other affairs in order will help expedite the process to grabbing a firm hold on your identity. So clean your room. Do your homework. Resolve that fight with that friend. Getting everything else out of the way will clear up the path to "me" time.

We all have excuses for why we're not growing in the direction we want to be growing — it could be money, school, a job, a relationship, you name it, someone's used it. If you're a busy bee, take strides to clear your schedule so you can sit down and tackle this thing head on. If it's always priority #2, it'll never get done.



