

Week 6 Practice

A friend recently told me about an interview he heard with self-help guru Tony Robbins. In the interview, Mr. Robbins said that he asks every client three questions:

1. *Who did you seek to be loved by?*
2. *Who did you have to become in order to get that love?*
3. *What parts of yourself did you have to disown to become that person?*

You are like a block of wood made up of all the things you've done—and the people you've thought you needed to be—in order to be loved. Buried within that block of wood is your true self. So, becoming your true self begins with carving away all the things you thought you needed to become (or not become), in order to be loved.

Take a week to answer those three questions. *Who did you seek to be loved by?* For instance, a parent. A grandparent. A sibling. A friend. The in-crowd. A teacher. A lover. A boss. *What did you have to do to get that love?* For instance, stay small so others could feel big. Be a good boy or girl. Be an athlete. Be sexy. Be anyone except yourself. *And what parts of your true self did have you have to disown in order to do so?* For instance, your strength. Your ambition. Your complicated feelings. Your opinions. Your tenderness.

Try not to judge, filter, or resist whatever comes to mind. This may be quite difficult because what comes to mind is likely to feel really big, and probably painful. There may be intense sorrow or grief that arises when you begin to glimpse the parts of you that have been buried away. You might feel angry at those people who loved you so conditionally. You might feel afraid of what these revelations will mean for your relationships, past and present.

Try to be patient with yourself.

Over the next several weeks we will be practicing being present to our pain. This is an essential part of healing and becoming whole, because wholeness always exists on the other side of our pain. If you feel stuck or overwhelmed by this task—or if you don't feel like you can practice the next several weeks on your own, it is important that you seek out a friend who can walk through the exercises with you. If you do not feel comfortable asking someone you know to join you in these weeks, this may be the point to reach out to a therapist who does this kind of exercise every day.