

VOCABULARY:

DILEMMAS

We all have “**dilemmas**”. (financial, health, interpersonal, etc.) Dilemmas are real life situations that we are facing in the world.

STRATEGIES

We all have “**strategies**” (patterns of relating to previous stressors that we use in the present). Biologically, a “strategy” is a set of neuropathways that fired off at an earlier stress point that helped you deal with that stress point. You then used those same neuropathways when other stressors came up and developed a pattern of using them. When you are in your “strategy” you biologically do not have access to the rest of your brain. You only have access to the part of your brain that was firing off when the strategy was born. In that sense, it is similar to a “trance”. You are not all there.

ORGANIC SELF / SPIRIT / WHO I AM

We all have an “**Organic Self / Spirit**” (Who we are underneath the ‘strategies’ that we’ve developed. –Worthy of Contact, Worthy of Boundaries, We know what lands with us and what triggers us, etc.) Biologically, God and Darwin have designed our brain to be pre-packaged to have this organic self. So, it is possible that somebody can spend their whole life reinforcing negative strategies and still, underneath those strategies is the biological capacity of being a organic self. It is already hard-wired in. So, even if you don’t use it a lot, it is already there. We are not creating something that has not been there. We’re practicing accessing what God and Darwin have already given us.

THE NOTICER:

By “The Noticer”, I mean that part of ourself that is able to notice and pay attention to what is actually happening. When our “Noticer” is activated, it means we are paying attention to our Physical Sensations, our Emotional Reactions / Gut Feelings, and the quality of our thoughts. If an image in our mind comes up, we “notice” that. If you notice that you are cold, that is different from being cold. When we are in “noticer” mode, it can be helpful to slow things down. Often when we are analyzing things quickly, the analytical / keeping track of data part of the brain kicks in more than the calm aware part of the brain. Important: When we are in “noticer” mode, we are not trying to induce an experience. We are not trying to relax or become enlightened, or in touch with our feelings (or any other agenda); we are noticing what actually happens on 3 levels (Somatic/Physical sensations, Emotional / Gut Feeling, and the quality of our thoughts)

THE 12 STEPS TO WHO I AM PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS:

Personal Practice instructions for people who have experienced sending in their organic self.

1) Step One: Ask yourself, who do I want to send in? This step is important because it helps us realize that there is a choice, and an awareness that I may have just got caught up in a strategy, and I have the ability and freedom to make a choice about who I want to send in. Autonomy is created. As an autonomous person, we feel empowered, even if we are in a painful dilemma. We are not stuck and hopeless, even if our particular strategy makes us feel that way.

2) Step Two: Verbally name the pathway that helps you get access to your organic self.
"Who I am is _____."

I like to verbally affirm who I am as a direct pathway to creating a felt sense of empowerment in being me. Other ways include visualizing somebody who you know or knew (or a spiritual foundation) affirming who you are AND rotating visualizing their affirmation with your own verbalization of "This is who I am." There are many pathways to your organic self / spiritual core. If you are in a dilemma, pick one pathway that has worked for you to get you to your organic self. If you are not in a dilemma, then choose whether or not you want to pick the one that already works for you or practice expanding another access point to root. Here is a partial list that I find helpful in getting me to my organic self:

- **I know What works for me and what doesn't**
 - "Who I am is someone who knows What Works for Me and What Doesn't Work for Me"
 - "Who I am is someone who knows what kind of love really lands and what kind of contact makes me uncomfortable".
- **Capable of Loving and Taking in Love:**
 - "Who I am is someone who knows what it feels like to give love and what it feels like to take in real love."
- **Voice:**
 - "Who I am is someone who's voice is worth being heard"
- **Connection:**
 - "Who I am is someone who is worthy of contact and connection."

- **Worthy of having my boundaries respected:**
 - “Who I am is somebody who is worthy of having boundaries.”
 - “Who I am knows what it feels like to have my boundaries respected and what it feels like to have my boundaries pushed upon.”
- **Spiritual Connection: (If Spirituality is problematic for you then don’t use this pathway)**
 - If you have internalized a version of “God” that reinforces a negative pathway of “I have to do the right thing in order to be worthy of love”, then do not use your spiritual pathways until your other pathways to “who I am” are strong.
 - If the person you are working with is anti-spiritual, don’t use spiritual language when you are describing the process. Use the biological language. Don’t insist on “spiritual” language if biological language works for somebody.
 - “Who I am is a child of God.” (worthy of love how I am)
 - Visualize a time that you had a felt sense of God’s affirmation of your unconditional value. (Revisit that mountain top high in your mind and notice how your body feels).
 - “Who I am is someone who is loved by God.”

3) **Step Three: Make sure the noticer part of you is online.**

The noticer part doesn't have an agenda of making a certain experience. Rather, it notices what actually comes up. (Physically, Emotionally, Quality of Thoughts).

When negative / destructive thoughts get activated, we affirm them as thoughts that get activated. But when we feel Alive in who we are, we affirm that experience as a physical manifestation of who I am. This is actually a very important decision.

A. **If a judgmental thought comes up**, or if your internal critic is activated, then do the following:

1. Slowly verbally affirm who I am (EX: “Who I am I’m worth connecting with”)
2. Verbally affirm, “When I affirmed Who I am that I’m worth connecting with, these critical thoughts (What came up) got activated.... AND (Self Statement) – “Who I am, I’m worth Connecting with.”
3. [Repeat] Then Go back to Who You Are and verbally reaffirm the truth, whether you feel it or not and continue again.

If it is common for the “Internal Critic” to come up. The way to deal with it is to simply acknowledge who you are, acknowledge that the “internal critic strategy” got activated, and to then acknowledge who “I am” again. And hold it as if both are true rather than in argument with each other.

B. If a relaxing physical sensation or an affirming sense of self, or a physical or emotional release comes up.

1. Verbally affirm who I am (EX: “Who I am, I’m worth connecting with”
2. Verbally affirm, “When I affirmed Who I am that I’m worth connecting with, this is what it feels like to be me.
3. [Repeat] Then Go back to Who You Are and verbally reaffirm the truth, whether you feel it or not and continue again.

If Positive Physical Sensations Come Up: If when you are in a positive physical or emotional sensation, and you are able to sit with and for 30 seconds to a few minutes (flushing in the face, relaxed breathing, shoulders loosened, etc.), we are expanding neuropathways in our brain that allow us to have more of an experiential access to what it feels like to be us when we are who we are. If we sit with this longer, we are expanding our capacity of getting back to it later when we are craving access to grounding.

If Positive Emotional Sensations Come Up: If a feeling of confidence and empowerment comes up, then notice that feeling and sit with it and notice what it is like to be you when you are feeling the feeling that happens to come up after you name who you are.

4) **Step Four: REPEAT** It may sound weird to have a step be “Repeat”, but this is actually very important. **Repeat** naming who you are and noticing the physical sensations and emotional experiences of what it is like to be you until you have a felt sense access to your organic self. We are not focusing on having a cognitive intervention. We are not just talking to ourselves and trying to convince the logical part of our brain, we are creating room so our nervous system can slowly take in who “I am”. We are repeating until our whole self (Body / Emotions / Thoughts / Spiritual Awareness) enjoys being who we are. We are PRACTICING enhancing the neuro-pathways that are in our nervous system that give us access to who we are.

We need to repeat / practice because we need to compensate for all of the years of practice we’ve already given to our “strategies”. Over time, your brain will physically be altered if you practice and the neuropathways to access who you are will be physically fatter and the neuropathways that make it easier to send in your “strategy” will physically shrink.

5) **Step Five: Make sure you are in your organic self.** The Litmus test is, “Is the felt state of being that I am in right now a state that I would wish upon others if they had to be in that state for 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. If the state of being that you are in is

something that you would wish upon others as a blessing, then you are in your organic self. If the state of being that you are in would be a curse if somebody else had that state of being for 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, then you know you are in a strategy and not your organic self. If you slipped into a strategy again, go back to step 1.

6) **Step Six:** REPEAT. Don't Skip this Step. **Repeat** naming who you are and noticing the physical sensations and emotional experiences of what it is like to be you.

7) **Step Seven: Ask yourself if it is a fact?** After you are in your embodied state, ask yourself, "Is 'Who I am is _____', a fact?" This step is important to affirm, so the naysayer part of your brain can be satiated. In this step, we are solidifying that what we are doing is real. It is not a feel good exercise that is B.S., but something that is real in the world. It is a fact whether we are feeling empowered in the moment or not. It is not a Pollyanna exercise. We are affirming that our sense of embodiment in who we are is a state that comes up when we affirm reality. It is a spiritual fact (it is how God sees us). It is a psychological fact (proven from attachment theory studies), and as far as how the brain functions, it is a biological fact.

Be creative and playful when you ask if it is a fact: From the center of the earth, is this true? If all the angels were to vote on it, would it be true? If we amassed all the scientists in the world, would they know it is true?

8) **Step Eight:** **Notice** how you feel when you affirm who you are and affirm that it is a fact.

9) **Step Nine:** Really Repeat it again. **Repeat** naming who you are and noticing the physical sensations and emotional experiences of what it is like to be you. It is important to get it reinforced on a felt sense level after we just reaffirmed it on a "factual level".

10) **Step Ten: Ask, "Is it a fact on the gut feeling level?"** Earlier, we affirmed it was a "factual fact". Now, we're re-asking the question but asking ourselves, "When I check in with my own gut and sense of who I am, when I am in this state, right now, is this who I am?"

If a nay-sayer pops in and says something like, "I'm not like this most of the time, so it is not really true, *INTERUPT the nay-sayer*. And affirm reality. In reality, when I am in "a strategy", which may have been a large part of my life, it is NOT who I am. [That is why strategies are no longer helpful]. Affirm that when I send in a strategy, my strategy does not have access to the part of my brain that knows that I am "Worthy of love, boundaries, know what works for me, etc". But, when I am "Who I am", I have access to a deeper sense, of "Yes, this is me".

11) **Step Eleven:** Keep repeating steps 2 and 3 until you have a verbal affirmation of who you are, a felt sense that awakens in your body and emotions.

12) **Step Twelve:** After you have a strong sense of who you are, and a felt sense of it, then choose one dilemma to look at.

Warning: Make sure your “notice” is on. Notice who jumps in! Often times one of your strategies will pop up. Don’t get discouraged if this happens. It is awesome that you noticed it because it gives you an excellent opportunity to practice. Go back to Step One. And do steps one through eleven again. And before going to Step Twelve, make sure that you are very intentional about the choice point of who I am choosing to send in. Anticipate the strategy will want to be chosen by you to address the dilemma. But choose to send “Who I am” in.

Without trying to address the dilemma, simply notice how it feels to be you, and how it feels to be you while noticing the dilemma. Then notice that it feels very different then if you were in a strategy. The chances are, the decisions you make in addressing the dilemmas will be better ones because you are using your whole brain and not just a fragmented part that got created whenever your dilemma was created.

WITH A PARTNER VS. PERSONAL PRACTICING

With A Partner: If you are with another person, verbalize it out loud so that way you can get the benefit of interpersonal reinforcement (the other person can authentically look at you in your eyes and tell you in their own words, “darn right!” This is great because your nervous system internalizes both your own affirmation as well as their affirmation.

This is important to do with a partner while we are learning it. If I am helping somebody else practice going into “Who I am”, my job is to cheerlead from an authentic place, and when they have a strategy that pops in, to INTERRUPT the strategy (even if it feels like we’re interrupting them) and ask them to notice that the strategy got sent in and then ask them “Who do YOU want to go in? (Strategy or Who I am)”

By Yourself? If you are by yourself, you can say it out loud or in your mind's eye. Name who you are slowly. Repeat it a few times. Change the voice that you use when you name who you are. Use a matter of fact tone. Use an excited tone. Use an inspired tone. Name who you are.

Breathing exercise: I’ve noticed that in practicing by myself that breathing slowly can help. I get to “Who I am” much quicker when I use this breathing exercise. I think this breathing exercise is effective because it slows our nervous system down. We biologically process empathy and contact much slower than the speed of our thoughts.

On a slow **inhale**, I say to myself “Who I am is _____”

When there is a **pause** before the slow exhale, I quickly scan my body / feelings / thoughts. I don’t try to do anything with them other than notice. And if nothing comes up, that is fine.

On the **exhale**, I cheerlead. I’ll pretend that I’m talking to another person and give a statement that fits my personality. And when you cheerlead yourself, do it with compassionate tone you might imagine reassuring a significant person in your life. And have a matter of fact, normalizing tone. I’ll rotate between “right on”, “Yep, it’s true,”, “it feels good, huuuhh”,

Practicing Ideas:

- 1) Set your **watch alarm** to go off every hour and when it goes off, ask yourself the question, “Who am I sending in right now? Who do I want to send in?” This is important because it reinforces the idea that we have a choice.
- 2) Find a partner to practice with. (Your partner, a friend, somebody in your church)
- 3) It is easier to create a habit of expanding who you are by tagging onto already daily existing rituals rather than making this something else that you have to do in your day. Good times can be:
 - a. When I first wake up. Before I go to bed,
 - b. Before I turn my phone on.
 - c. Before I check facebook (if you’re addicted)
 - d. Before I get out of a vehicle (you’ll be more of a blessing when you arrive to work or arrive home!)
 - e. If you go to yoga, when they do the stillness part at the end, you can practice then.