

THE MEMORIED SELF

Our relationship with time is central to our relationship with ourselves. Past, present, and future are not just descriptions of time's unfolding, they also tell the story of three significant states of consciousness. These could be described as the 'memoried self', the 'experiencing self' and the 'anticipating self'. The experiencing self relates to the present, the anticipating self relates to the future. Our focus in this handout is on the memoried self, which relates to the past.

The reason most of us are unable to move out of our unhappiness, hurt, pain and negative patterns, is because we are unhealthily bound up with our pasts. In truth, the past is meant to be our reference library, the place where all our experiences reside. Everything you've ever thought, said, or done lives there. This is what we're referring to as the memoried self. This aspect of the self has many corridors and rooms, housing all our memories and experiences. When we relate to this part of the self with awareness it positively informs our 'here and now' experience and helps us make the best decisions and choices. Unfortunately, far too often this is not the case. As each moment called 'now' unfolds we have the opportunity to learn from what has gone before, to write a new script, move in a new direction, or consolidate the positives. If we have no negative attachment to our pasts, we choose to find the good in things and the benefit in every experience as our instinct knows this is a far healthier place to live. Sadly, far too often, what actually happens is that the moment called 'now' grabs our attention as it's meant to but instead of us staying with the experience of the present, standing at the door of infinite possibility, we follow that moment as it moves from the 'now' to join the past. Following that moment with all its content we are now looking at reality through the eyes of the memoried self, rather than the experiencing self. Furthermore, when the new moment called 'now' turns up we miss it as our attention is not with the present but with the past.

This happens so often, for so many of us, that we fail to recognise we're no longer living in the 'now'. Most of us would insist that we are, not realising that we've been seduced by the content of the moment and become busy following the trail that has been laid. Then, if that has thrown up any negative reminders of things that have passed, we find ourselves living a 'recycled past', believing it to be the 'now' because we're not aware of this pattern/habit. The stuff that belongs to the 'now' is then missed because we remain emotionally connected to those things that come into the field of our awareness. This is not the healthiest relationship for us to foster with our experiences or with time. Some degree of emotional detachment is needed for there to be sufficient objectivity. In that way we can better see the connections between our experiences and life events. When we are too heavily embroiled in the paths we have taken and the experiences we've been exposed to, we struggle to let go and so are denied the learning and the opportunities that each new moment presents us with. What we do instead is keep revisiting the experience using our memories as the template for our perception, attitudes, responses, and behaviour. All of which is flawed. If you continue to respond to things the same way as you have done in the past, then there's very little capacity for self-improvement and positive change.

It's important to understand that there is a precious relationship that we need to have with the memoried self because we cannot be complete without the evidence contained within it. The encyclopaedic records of the memoried self are not only the building blocks of our

personality, character, drives and intuition; they also hold crucial records and points of reference for the use of the experiencing self. Without them, the experiencing self would be compromised in its ability to make the best choices moment to moment and so it's important to recognise that the memoried self is not to be condemned and criticised for the role that it plays, we simply need to form a healthier relationship to it. We need to stop using the past as something with which we beat ourselves. Also, when we relate to the memoried self appropriately the past becomes an invaluable tutor.

Hopefully, your understanding of the memoried self is becoming clearer (you may need to read this several times before it is fully understood). And as you begin to make the connections the importance of a healthy relationship between the memoried self (your past), the experiencing self (the present) and the anticipating self (the future) will become ever clearer. When all three are appropriately aligned one can experience peace, joy and contentment but when misaligned, fear, negativity, hopelessness and despair - and how they relate to time - pull against the best interests of the self.

The script below forms a template of how you might better relate to this aspect of the self in order that the past and present work in the mutual interests of the self.

I notice each moment as it floats into my awareness.... There is a variety of 'stuff' pulling on my attention.... it has a familiar feel.... things that I recognise from before.... I realise as the familiar comes into my awareness that there is previous learning and experience that can inform how I respond and react.... I can make those responses and reactions the same as what has gone before or different.... where it is beneficial for the response to be the same then I'm happy to respond in the same way.... When my previous responses or reactions have not been beneficial to others or myself, I realise I can choose to relate differently.... and I do. I do not want to be defined by yesterday anymore.... yesterday has had its day.... this is a new day with new opportunities, and I choose to embrace it.... I let go of yesterday and only hold onto those memories and experiences that have relevance to this moment.... I've come to understand that the memoried self is a beautiful ally.... it only wishes to help me make the best decisions.... When it thinks I'm not making best use of what it has to offer it can sometimes panic in its desperate attempt to claim my attention.... In those moments, I lose sight of what it is really saying, and I then get caught up in the frenzy and subsequent panic.... However, with my new-found awareness, I choose for this not to happen today.... I see, hear, and understand how yesterday is relevant to today.... I let go of what is no longer useful.... The memoried self and the experiencing self are now able to be at one.... the conflict has ceased.... they become busy co-operating in the best interests of the self.... Collaboration and co-operation supersede competition and conflict.... I am clear.... free from anxiety.... I am at peace and for that I give thanks.... My awareness is where it belongs.... at one with this moment.... I am at ease.... I am free to choose what is right for me.... and I do.