# IDENTITY TRAINING

# LESSON EIGHT

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## Critical Issues for Identity

The entrance to the Temple of Identity is flanked by the great columns of SASHET and BTJGL. Those two columns remain in view from all points within the structure. They frame all other considerations. It would be wonderful to assume that each student automatically operates out of Real feelings and loving values, but the reality is that it takes time to anchor those as first reflexes of the soul.

Along the way there are issues to solve, ones that separate those who approach life as children from those who live life as adults. The drama around these issues is seen daily in therapy as a human struggle with developing the mature mind. Failures around these issues are as dramatic as that of saddling oneself with a Sad Racket, playing Poor Me, and manipulating people rather than sharing life with them. It is critical, but sad, to realize that some people refuse to grow up. They have figured out comfortable adjustments to life that provide reasonable protection from the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: hunger, disease, pestilence and war. They know how to survive. There has been great investment of time and energy across the years in developing an image of incapability that is convincing to others and serves as a halfway believable story that keeps one from responsibility. Surviving on false strokes, the best that can be said of these who live the Grand Refusal to life, is that they 'make do.'

While the authors feel sad about those who prefer the non-aware life, time is spent with those who desire to be all they can be. In their normal budgets is a category that could be called "Personal Growth." They ask the deep questions, sweat through the dark nights of the soul when one "feels like a motherless child" (as a spiritual has it), and finally come to have a peace in the center of their personality. The task of the following is to show the various 'stations of the pilgrimage' that are visited in route to obtaining that peace and deep self-esteem.


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## I.

## The Decision To Live

It has been pointed out, previously, that the foundation of integrity is having made the decision to never murder, commit suicide, or go insane. With the full powers of the grown-up mind catastrophic fantasies of children and actions of those who revert to infantile solutions are ceased. No matter the conditions, there is the deep decision to stay alive and use all abilities to go forward.

The adult decision to live needs to be carried to the level of the Life Child within. There must be an internal dialog where a covenant is made finally with oneself. This is no promise or contract with another; it is deeper than that. It is the choice to cease playing games with death by driving fast, living hard, or any option that threatens one's being. When this decision is made in the basement of the personality, each day is accepted as a gift, and each relationship becomes an opportunity for closeness. Beautiful things to eye and ear appear that were missing in the state of non-awareness where one toyed with destructive alternatives.

Many have tough times making this deep contract within: those who were abused, those who absorbed the early Ricochet of mother's negativity, and those with a 2 year old issue who insist upon separateness. Each must leam that it is their life now, and that mom, dad, abusing others, or childhood traumas are of no significance when it comes to accepting one's own life as precious. In other words, to continue the negative options is to refuse to grow up and accept life as is.

## II.

## Beyond Abandonment Fears

The feared catastrophe behind all the cares of children is abandonment. Failures to solve this issue is to live a timid life dependent upon others. Even a grown-up can continue to adapt, worrying continually about what would happen if an important other were to leave, a job was lost, or security were to be removed. The mature adult leams to accept aloneness and even moves to a private joy in solitude. Alone with Nature a person re-gains perspective and receives an abiding tenderness for all of life. Some never reach that point.


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They live in fear that another will abandon. It is a giant step for identity when a person declares: "I've come to like me. I enjoy being alone. Oh, understand that I love people; I just don't need them any more to be happy." Liberation Psychology sees this as the great issue to solve, knowing that it encompasses even one's fear of death. Ironically, when it is basically solved, one chooses people and loves with a new sense of giving.

## III

## Independent Thinking

Each of us has a private construction of reality. We are assaulted, early on, of course, by the interpretations of others as to what is valuable, worth doing, and worthy of reflection. It is difficult to keep one's own mind, to study and gain perspective, to avoid thinking fallacies, and keep learning in order to have the right of thought. Honesty, of course is basic to this. Communities can teach conformity, or they can keep challenging a person to develop a separate identity with unique ideas and emphases. That is one function of friends, by the way. It is good to have people who question those areas where we are dogmatic and keep sacred cows in the mental library.

Finally, of course, the failure to do one's own thinking is actually a reversion back to the fear of abandonment. In other words, the desire for belonging pre-empts willingness to be honest. When that occurs, one has made a compromise of identity. Finally, any wound on one's integrity as a thinker cannot be tolerated. Conformity for the sake of community is too much. Community, as a check on personal idiosyncrasies, is very valuable. We should always submit our thinking to the judgment of people and honest data. To do less is to live in an inadequate little house fearing that truth may come knocking at the door. The conundrum must be phrased: truth liberates. Fear of honest thinking enchains. Truth *is* friendly. To be mindless, accept what others say as true, and simply follow is a great temptation, we would agree. To do that, however, is a decision to stay a child and not an adult.

## IV.

## Need Fulfillment and Health

As Twenty-First century electronics wraps everyone into a united world, the data


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from all cultures can be sifted as to advice on health. One thing emerges: moderation. Students of ancient Greece and ancient Israel knew that already. Now we have the testimony from eastern countries. While humans are rather obsessive animals, destructive obsessions are viewed as needless waste of human potential. The trick is to find healthy pleasures and balance them with the rest of the marvel of what is in life.

Almost every college text on psychology contains Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. At the basic level we need food, air, drink and rest; at the next level we need security and safety; at the next is a sense of belonging and love; at the fourth level is self-respect and regard from others; and finally, there are the self-actualizing needs of being "true to one's own nature." Adults monitor those needs and seek to find non-obsessive solutions. Health is one's own responsibility, and no other can pre-empt private choices.

Need it be said that this is one area where there can be failure to grow up and refusal to accept the choice of powerful identity? You decide.

## V.
## Knowing What You Want

A tragic thing frequently occurs in couple counseling. One partner is furious at the other for not providing what is wanted. The irony is that the other cannot provide it because the first one does not even know what is wanted! While wants may not be as basic as needs, they certainly provide some of the spice that makes the life cake worth eating! A 'want' refers to something that is satisfying to the soul, something that provides a bit of mental integration and gives one a sense of being loved by another.

Think of this scenario to gain a perspective on what constitutes 'wants'. If you consistently had poor nurture as a child, as an adult you want someone who is kind to you, reaches out, touches, talks softly, and shows appreciation for your being. If you were treated as invisible and were not addressed, you may want someone to talk with you, share, and acknowledge your presence. If your father never wrote a letter, it may well be that a visit from "Hallmark" is important to you.

The wants are usually quite simple. There may be a phase where wants get


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permeated with childhood wishes while diamonds, furs, and gloriously appearing objects are significant. Finally, however, what counts are things like hugs, honest loving conversation, being smiled at, recognized, laughed with, having tender moments, sharing all the SASHET feelings honestly, and the simple pleasures of life. As we grow older, life gets sifted so that what really counts are those moments with a companion soul where appreciation of life is at zenith.

Remember that it is frequently heard in therapy that someone is not meeting "my wants". All too often it is discovered that the person has not shared what is really wanted because that "makes me too vulnerable; s/he should just know!" Nope. That's not the way it works. Demanding that another mind read is a continuation of the wishful thinking of children that finally results in the pouting sulk of a child. Adults have another way. They know what is wanted. They ask and initiate in order for it to happen. In other words, rather than waiting for a hug, or asking for a hug, a mature individual walks up to their significant other, hugs and says: "Will you give me a big hug?" and then describe exactly the kind of hug desired. And, ladies and gentlemen who are reading this text, that is a BIG difference.

## VI.
## Perfection or Excellence

It would be a rare client who would not be embroiled on either relationships where Pleasing or Being Perfect are not haunting in the background. Little boys please their mommies and daddies and seek to be perfect for one of them; little girls please their mommies and daddies and seek to be perfect for one of them. What remains in the psyche is a scared little child who obsessively attempts to do things in a fashion that will finally gain great acceptance. When the person with this issue gets married, the really goofy thing is that the being perfect and pleasing are hooked up to what would have made their original mother or father happy -- not their spouse!! If mom was scared due to lack of money, the little-boy-become-man may make tons of money to make sure that his mommy is okay *even though his present wife may want him to be with her and not be so tied down*


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*to working all the time and providing things.*

Gaining freedom from a life of Pleasing and Being Perfect is easily written down here, though the actual accomplishment of it is something else again. A person must learn that love comes from being, not doing; that scares leftover from childhood spoil the broth of adulthood; that a mature person wants a partner, not an automaton still wound up from a mother or father's problems. The reflex to please and seek to be perfect is so deep that the actions are usually going full-scale before a person realizes that they were all triggered by a first micro-second of scare. Frequently divorces occur because one person accuses the partner of demanding perfection or pleasing, when, in point of fact, the stimulus for both of those adaptive phenomena occurred far before the partner was even met! Leaving a wife or a husband is then symbolic: a person is leaving a childhood script and has wrongly cast the married partner as the evil enforcer, when it was really of one's own unconscious doing. Isn't that sad?

By the way, it is okay to be nice, thoughtful, and a caring person. The point is to not do those out of scare, but out of quiet love. Further, it is okay to do things excellently, not out of scare, but from the emotion of excitement. There is quite a difference. One other thing: being perfect is always delusional because none of us mortals are ever afforded that.

## VII.
## Acceptance of the Unconscious

Literally, all that is meant is that you realize that your mind is more complex and powerful than the rational. It is fascinating to discover, for instance, that years were spent on obsessional pleasing out of an internal scare that long since was forgotten by the conscious mind. Rather than go into scared protections about how reasonable one has always been, it is okay to find that one's quality relationships have been vitally affected by childhood issues. Of course, we have had a core Self that is responsible and has made marvelous choices. Of course, we have chosen, all our days, to use abilities and stride forward. To acknowledge the Unconscious is not to wound human freedom; it is to release it all the more.

All acceptance of the Unconscious means is the willingness to learn internally. The


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running fear of possibly discovering horrible skeletons in the closet is replaced with a curiosity of learning from an internal teacher. In other Liberation Psychology seminars, the Modular Mind provides a modern understanding of what Freud was reaching for when he talked about the Unconscious. Wisdom comes when we are patient and are willing to learn both from without and within. There is no need for fear. All we will ever find is a little child experiencing the world and seeking to make sense of it

## VIII.
## Sexuality

In a world where radical experiment seems the order of the day, it is difficult to decide what is pathology stemming from childlike influences, and what is normal and healthy. One thing is sure: if one is inducing pain or practicing humiliating tactics even on a willing other the likelihood is that the behavior is influenced by unresolved childhood conflicts. Children have sadistic fantasies, adolescents have wild imaginings, and there are perverted acts that have their source in birth traumas (cf. Stanislav Grof s basic perinatal maternal). Some exaggerate 'freedom' in sexuality as a rebellious move against parents. Those who solve the traumas and issues from childhood prefer the way of healthy, fulfilling sexual intimacy. It is difficult to conceive of scared or angry sex as accomplishing the integration of the body that sex can provide. As dreams integrate the left and right hemisphere's daily productions, so, too, sexual intercourse integrates the body's tensions and experiences. As children symbolize a couple's love for each other in the public arena, private sexuality, known only to the pair, is a major symbol of their love. To be sure, at the conclusion of sex, a person can weep sad tears for lost days where love was scarce or tender tears of thankfulness for being loved. In the act of sexuality, happiness from laughter to joy is at apex, excitement is at fevered pitch, and tenderness leads to the melting of two humans momentarily into one. Even the funny little private jokes between the two that emerge at this time are part of the glue that holds love together.

This is one area that serves as a test for whether a person has grown to mature identity. Remaining taboos from parents may lead a person to treat the whole subject as if it is naughty; power ploys leftover from control issues of childhood may lead a person to


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simply use sex as a form of domination; and coy, seductive come-here-go-away practices may lead another to gain rejections received as a child. The options for continuing childhood issues is rather vast at this point and one would have to study sexual literature to see how wild humans can be who refuse to grow up. That sentence is not said to reduce sexuality to a set ritual devoid of passion. Rather, it is phrased in order to have people monitor whether true passion is being released or some form of scared/angry/wild fantasy life of a repressed child.

The goal is what counts. If one knows that there has been a bodily verification of being truly loved, deeply fulfilled, honestly received and lovingly given, that there has been no internal check from some old repression or fear, and that not only two bodies, but two hearts have melted toward each other... then one is probably in the direction of mature sexuality. Furtive, obscene acts done in some kind of rebellion against perceived authority will not pass that test. While some think that it is the WHAT or WHO WITH that reveals mature sexuality, it is the HOW that finally determines. In sum, one knows within when it has been mature, ethical lovemaking or some continuation of a childhood mentality. That is what counts for identity: being true to your best self, feeling your feelings, and keeping integrity with one's private valuational set.

## IX.
## Money

Married couples seldom argue about money; they argue about the other's childlike approach to money. This can range from obsessive clinging to it to wild spending, from silent terrors where one becomes a workaholic not living in the present day because of 'security' scares to giving it away too generously because of Rescuing. The variations are as diverse as childhood era situations. Maybe one's father worried about money so much that there is an automatic scare (a Ricochet) when it comes to money. Maybe another's mother lived in a shack and the child makes millions of dollars to protect her ~ keeping on even after she has been dead for a decade. Another person handles money like a four year old lost in wish, spending money on frivolous little matters that allow dreamy fantasies to


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continue. Another refuses to make money, lives in poverty, and continues a family script. The options are endless.

As for the person of Identity, it must be understood that probably everyone is marked in some way or another. As loving sexuality is a hallmark of having left traumas from childhood, so, too, money becomes another central symbol. It is necessary to know something about money. Memories of years spent in counseling come to mind where women have known nothing about money and are in treacherous waters when a spouse dies, there is a divorce, or terrors of abandonment led them to adapt to pathological circumstances. We have witnessed men run the full range of goofiness on the issue of money. Humans act out the failures of childhood precisely at this point The eldest child Rescues; the baby child anticipates Rescuing. One person's parents insisted upon responsibility; another's parents were indulgent to the max. There is the guy whose mommy provides for him when he is still fifty; and the middle-aged girl whose daddy is "always willing to help his little dumpling". It is quite an understatement to say: "failure in this area does not bode well for a person's achieving maturity".

An old religious tradition said that one should 'live on a third, give a third, and save a third'. In the area of finances it is always important to a) know how to make it, b) know how to spend it wisely, c) know how to invest it and save it, and d) how to prepare for the non-income years of old age. It means losing remnants of childhood dependency where someone else was responsible for food, clothing, and shelter. Maturity in this area can mean something as simple as balancing the checkbook, spending within your means, or working a little extra to save something. It may mean getting a job that pays you what you are worth. When a person says, "It's up to me; I'm responsible.", we are well on our way here. That is Identity talk.

## X.

## Beyond the Parents

It is important to realize that these issues do not exist in isolation. They interface. The solving of one affects other areas. As therapists we are always amazed at how clients


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have such enormous difficulties in going beyond the psychology of their mother and father. Here is idolatry par excellence. If dad was a persecutor who terrorizingly defined a little boy's existence, it may well be that the child conforms for decades but then moves to a rage against his father for still another decade. The father has become an umbrella by which the sun is obscured. As the conformity did not free, neither does the rage. The grand decision that must be made is to move out of the psychology circle of the father. That is not easy. Of course, what is most difficult is understanding that the mom and dad had a childhood and that they, most probably, did not grow up. (Does that sound harsh? The modular mind of other Liberation Psychology material helps here. Think of a gumball machine. The parent has some units that are mature, to be sure; others that are radically affected by their traumas. Unfortunately, the most memorable parts of their parenting comes out of the licorice gum balls!) Despite our understanding of their traumas, we still have the problem of getting out of the emotional traps that keep us enchained. Reflexions. Rackets. Ricochets. Particularly, Ricochets, that most pernicious category of them all.

To mature, we HAVE TO go beyond our parents. This means going beyond them in regard to feeling options most of all where we have unscared happiness, releasing excitement, mellowing tenderness, grief at the tragedies of the world, and rage at injustices. We HAVE TO go beyond their thinking to a new world emerging, beyond their actions to a released usage of our abilities, beyond their injunctions, beyond their models, and beyond their belief structures to that which helps humanity. At their core, in their best self, they would want us to go beyond them. It must be achieved. And it begins with becoming authentic about Real Feelings. One sentence helps: Surrender parents to the care of God.

It all adds up to integrity, that wonderful combination of congruency, honesty, and commitment to high values. Integrity is the special word that implies a lifetime of development of the self. To have quiet self-esteem, knowing that one has done one's best, provides the greatest assurance in the face of death allowable. No one can remove one's integrity. Better, there is now a model to be emulated.


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STUDY GUIDE

TO

ACCOMPANY

IDENTITY TRAINING SEMINARS

LESSON EIGHT

No one wants to be saddled by issues from yesteryear. In counseling offices people struggle to become free from continuing pain begun in childhood that persists despite the best conscious left-brain intentions. As an avenue for personal growth, the Log affords you an opportunity to write down your progress and then check on yourself a year or so later. Those who have done this in former classes are amazed in several ways: one, how much they have grown and, two, how a perspective after that growth affords even more freeing insights. Your work, therefore, will be well worth it.

1. Record the date of your decision to live. Have you made both the adult and the child forms of this contract?
2. How is the issue of abandonment still a part of your life? What steps have you made towards the achievement of solitude, that is the acceptance of aloneness?
3. Consider how your mother and father did in regard to solving the issue of abandonment.
4. Do you know how to keep your thinking separate from others? Specifically, can you be tender to someone and still think independently?
5. Have you balanced your thinking by Left and Right Brain options?
6. Do you have a private obsession that drives you? What?
7. Grade yourself in your ability to ask for what you want: If you still anticipate that others will mind-read, you might subtract fifty from the above score.
8. Record instances in your life when you played the game: "If you really loved me, you would know what I want before I ask".
9. Are you still driven by pleasing others or a sense of perfectionism? Write down an example.


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10. Have you accepted that there are some mental operations that are outside your control? Do you accept that the Unconscious is friend and will teach you if you take time with it? How do you do that now?
11. Writing in your LOG about sexuality can leave you vulnerable. Still, it is worthwhile to really think how your excitement and tenderness in this area are still affected by the influences of childhood. Make notes, cryptic ones even, about what you need to investigate so you can have this pleasure.
12. What injunctions given to you about sexuality by your mom and dad are still in effect? Is it necessary that they remain in effect?
13. Sexuality is a symbol of the deep cherishing two people have for each other - so says the text. What else would you say about this area given your morality set? Record that in your LOG.
14. After studying the text's thoughts about money, record areas that need more work for your new being. Are you accomplishing what you want in this area? What needs to be done?
15. How do your parents still have you running in scared, angry, or sad circles? What do you need to do in order to divorce your mom and/or dad so that you can get on with your life?


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