

THE CHILD WITHIN

The fully functioning person has a fully functioning child integrated into their personality. Each one of us carries the three essential ingredients that when assembled form the core requirements of the human being. These are parent, adult, and child.

Each one of these aspects is crucial in the process of becoming whole. Their delicate, intricate relationship shape and mould our attitudes, characteristics, reactions, relationships, and perceptions. Part of the conundrum of the self can be grasped and unraveled when we understand each of these features, their relationship to each other and the critical role of the child in this triad.

The parent is that bit of us that contains the attitudes, feelings and behaviours assimilated from our own parents. It is the part of us that nurtures, protects, criticises, employs discipline and creates boundaries. The adult is that part of us that processes information, reasons, makes decisions, applies objectivity, and displays maturity. The child is that feature of our personality that is spontaneous, intuitive, full of emotion, playful, loving, sweet and innocent. These are just some of the qualities applicable to each of these aspects of the self. For true mental health to exist all three roles must be functioning well, independently, as well as inter-dependently. Only then can we really establish the foundation to love ourselves, our fellow human beings, and our world.

The crucial component in establishing a state of "inner order" is the child within. The way our child has been catered for determines the development and evolution of our adult and parent traits. Their growth and eventual role within our lives will be chiefly determined by the extent to which our child has really experienced a stable emotional environment, unconditional love and support, unadulterated attention and freedom of expression. These traits are essential to the formation of a fully functioning person who is driven by the power and appreciation of their own worth.

Due to society's loss of focus with regards to the importance of self-love and one's own value the child is that part of us that has suffered the most. It has been neglected, deprived, and abused. This neglect not only hampers our child, but it goes on to handicap our adult and parental attributes. In fact, our growth in the most important sense, i.e., psychologically and emotionally has been severely impaired. As a result, we have become "adult children" and "parent children" which means we are underdeveloped in both these areas of ourselves, unable to act at the highest levels within these roles and fulfill the demands and responsibilities inherent within these positions. So, although our bodies may have grown and so we appear to be adults, our emotional attributes are still very much at the child stage.

If we are to find that peace of mind, stability and happiness we all yearn for, we must liberate our own child. Through our child we can reclaim self-esteem and a sense of well-being. First, we must stop measuring ourselves by what is happening externally, self-worth is not determined by one's job, house, wealth, or other such status symbols. It is because of our internal bankruptcy that we cling to or strive to attain these external accessories and use them as measurements of our worth. Our lost childhood needs to be understood and grieved for, then we can transcend the pain, doubt and fear that binds us and access the amazing power within that is aching to be discovered.