

Freda Morris Hedges



My purpose is to be *kind*, find *truth*, and enjoy *beauty*.
Would you like to join me?

Dr. Hedges helps clients find and befriend the SubSelves that are most able to help with the concern at hand. If there is an immediate pressing problem, she uses a subtle energy technique to quickly bring about relief from emotional upset. In the peace that ensues, deep inner work with the SubSelves can be carried out on an ongoing basis to enhance personal development and spiritual growth. She charges the hourly income of the client and will work by the job with a money-back guarantee. To contact her:

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Balancing Heaven & Earth

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BEFRIENDING THE STRANGERS WITHIN

“Know thy self,” and “Love thine enemies,” seem to be different bits of advice. But if you think about it, can you deny that you have done things to yourself that an enemy isn’t likely to do to you? I can’t. An enemy is not likely to force you to spout off and hurt a friend’s feelings, overindulge, or stay up too late at night. SubSelf is the word I’ve found most useful in referring to the “people” I seem to be at various times. Some theorists call them subpersonalities. Some call them primary selves. *They* do these things mentioned above for good reasons of their own.

Piero Ferrucci, a subpersonality theorist, in his book, *What We May Be*, makes a rather strong statement: “One of the most harmful illusions that can beguile us is probably the belief that one is an indivisible, immutable, totally consistent being.” I can think of a lot of what seem to be “harmful illusions,” so I’m not willing to pick this as the *most* harmful one. I *can* say with certainty, however, that getting to know my SubSelves is providing me with delightful sources of help in daily life, fascination with my inner world, ways to relate more deeply with others, and facility with techniques for psychological and spiritual growth. In this essay, I explain why I think it is desirable to know our SubSelves, how to find them, how to deepen the relationships, and a new direction I am taking in this work.

SubSelves are psychological entities that co-exist as a group within a person. It is easy to realize that a human being is a multiplicity by noticing how people can completely change their outlook on life, their worldview, or their model of the universe. As our different SubSelves take different perspectives, life may appear to be a drag, a dance, a picnic, a bowl of cherries, the pits, a race, an adventure, a mystery, a puzzle, a nightmare, a merry-go-round, a fun game, a hard fight, and so on.

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These diverse points of view color perceptions and influence our way of being in the world. Each one of them creates a different self-image, body posture, and set of neurotransmitters in the brain. They stimulate diverse feelings, behaviors, word usage, habits, and beliefs. SubSelves are often extremely different from each other with different sets of motivations. Always, I believe, they have the well-being of the entity at heart, although the SubSelf's view may be narrow as to what is needed. For example, one of my SubSelves, a 14-year-old boy, is most interested in my having fun, but his ways of achieving this goal may interfere with my financial or household needs. Yet I still believe that each SubSelf was developed in order to support the health and wholeness of the person whose body they share.

Why am I so interested in SubSelves? In what ways do I find knowing them to be of benefit? There are small, pleasant, convenient benefits such as one may gain by giving the body to the appropriate SubSelf for doing a job at hand. For instance, if I consciously call upon a particular SubSelf when I am cooking, shopping, cleaning, and so forth, I do a better job, with greater ease, and with less likelihood of having a hurry-up mentality. That particular part of myself enjoys such activity and is happy to give it the time it takes.

temporary state. The quote below may give an idea why I am so happy to have their help. It is a comment from Hugh, one of my SubSelves paraphrased from notes he wrote on June 22, 2004:

“I am a part of you and you of me. We are given the privilege of living with this body more or less under our control. I have experienced oppression. I either did it in a past life as a serf or in your childhood, or perhaps I am just a metaphor for sadness that you have rarely been conscious of.

“But one thing is sure:

“I came into your consciousness because you were willing to take the risk of going deep within, for which I am eternally grateful. I am here to do my best to help you find all of yourself, your selves, and to do what serves best for your spiritual growth. This is the most anyone can do to make a difference in this world.”

about
Freda Morris Hedges, PhD

Dr. Hedges began her post PhD work as a professor of medical psychology at the University of California in Los Angeles. Later, relocating in the San Francisco Bay Area, she founded one of the first California State-licensed training programs in professional hypnotherapy. A pioneer in the revitalization of hypnosis as a viable healing modality, she authored two popular books on the subject: *Self-Hypnosis in Two Days* (E.P. Dutton, 1975) and *Hypnosis with Friends & Lovers* (Harper & Row, 1979).

It is truly amazing how very real the SubSelf is in my being. I feel as if I *am* the SubSelf while at the same time being fully cognizant that I am in a process designed ultimately to bring about integration, health, and wholeness. I am temporarily shifting into that SubSelf for a desirable purpose.

I recently discovered a new way to relate to my SubSelves as the result of a five-day dreamwork seminar with Jeremy Taylor, author of *Where People Fly* and *Water Runs Uphill*. His method requires that a person tell a dream and then other people respond by saying, “If this were my dream...” and tell what it might mean for them. Taylor believes that dreams always come in the service of health and wholeness. They help us become aware of our unconscious projections onto other people so that we can reclaim them as our own foibles or talents. The trouble with unconscious material is that it is, indeed, unconscious. When we work as if another person’s dream is our own, we are more apt to have meaningful insights that truly bring some of our own unconscious into active awareness. And often, the dreamer is also able to get insights from listening to the other person speaking “as if it were my dream.”

When I awoke at home after the dream workshop, I wrote my dreams of the night, and asked my SubSelves to write ‘as if it were their dreams.’ I am just starting this process and it seems to me to hold great potential. This is the direction I see my work heading. I expect the work with dreams and SubSelves to help bring my unconscious projections into awareness. I believe that as I become more and more aware of my projections, I will become better able to avoid over-identifying with what one normally calls, “me,” and to feel oneness with others.

An American Zen Master, Gempo Roshi, is using subpersonalities to facilitate an inner knowing that we are connected with others and our environment. He notes that when we know we are one with everything, we do not struggle against what is. With the help of my inner friends, who thankfully are no longer strangers to me, I expect to have fun while making progress toward connectedness as an ever-present way of being, as a stage of development rather than a

A larger reason for knowing our SubSelves well is to live life from an integrated perspective. Living from conflicting perspectives, without an effective way to resolve them, leads to focus on *events* that are taking place. Examples are making the team, graduating, getting a job or promotion, getting married, creating a family, getting published, going to the gym, losing weight, etc. All of this is based on seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, or seeking success and avoiding failure.

Knowing our SubSelves well and working with them leads to less interest in *events* and more interest in the general *quality* of life. The important question becomes, “How am I living my life?” rather than “What is happening or what is going to happen?” There is more focus on kindness and beauty in actions as opposed to what I will get out of this. By feeling the importance of *qualities* one is able to give less importance to the ever-changing realm of *events*. This seems to enhance greatly the ability to operate with passion for and commitment to whatever needs doing as opposed to operating from agitated moral outrage or some other agitated state. If one can give no-strings-attached service—given for the sheer delight of providing it—the action is probably coming from integration. Otherwise, the action is likely being taken to fulfill the self-concept of being a helpful person that one of the SubSelves holds. The trouble with this motivation is that the action is less likely to be truly helpful.

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How does one find these SubSelves whose hiddenness creates this personality that we want to integrate in order that we may live a larger life? Some of the SubSelves are so obvious that you probably know one or two already even if you haven’t been interested before. Depending on your personality, you might easily find the Controller, the Skeptic, the Clown, the Complainer, the Artist, the Hurt Child,

the Seeker and so on. If you *do* know some, but haven't spent much time with them, I suggest that you get acquainted before seeking to meet more.

Below is an exercise designed to bring SubSelves into awareness. In order to work with SubSelves you already know, go directly to Step #3. To find new SubSelves, begin with Step #1.

SubSelf Exercise

1) Bring to mind a time when you were "not yourself". This may be when you did or said something you regret, or you might have been uncharacteristically generous or brave. Alternatively, you can focus on one of your attitudes, traits, or habits. State the question, *Who is it that did x or that has x?*

2) Close your eyes and focus intently on your question without talking to yourself about it. Just wait expectantly for something to appear. It may come before your mind's eye, or it may speak to your mind's ear, or it may make itself known by a change in the feelings in your body.

3) However your SubSelf comes to mind, give it all the time it needs to reveal itself to you. Receive it as you would a welcome guest. Sit with it and get acquainted.

4) I find it useful to provide a writing instrument, either a keyboard or pen and paper. Asking questions will help move the writing process along. *How did you come to be in my personality? What purpose do you serve? What can I do for you? What is your greatest frustration? What is your greatest satisfaction?*

5) When the SubSelf has expressed itself as much as it wants, make some notes of your own. Describe your feelings about the interaction, and if you are so inclined, draw a representation of it. Make sure you have some term to designate it.

I suggest that you limit yourself to a half-dozen or so SubSelves until you have thoroughly explored, used, and integrated their offerings. Pace yourself as to how quickly you find your SubSelves. You may want to wait until the next day to meet a second SubSelf. Or you may meet several in a day depending on how intense and extensive the writings are.

Once you have your cadre of six or so, it is time to begin a regular practice that will bring closeness and intimacy with all of them. The best way I have found is to have regular, extensive dialogs with them in writing. What I recommend is setting aside some time once or twice a day in which to take turns answering the same questions. I spent forty minutes twice a day for three months taking turns responding to such statements as, *Tell me who you are*, or *Tell me what's on your mind*, or *Tell me how you think we can best proceed*, or some variation thereof. This brought great closeness and familiarity both between them and me and among them. I made a conscious decision to spend three months this way, and when the three months were over, I reduced the frequency, but I continue to interact often.



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During the three month-period, I wrote a response for five minutes while imagining that a particular SubSelf was carefully listening. Then I gave the body to him or her, and they wrote for five minutes while imagining I was the listener. In another variation, I had the SubSelves interact in this way with each other. After getting used to the process, I found I didn't need to specifically time the writings.