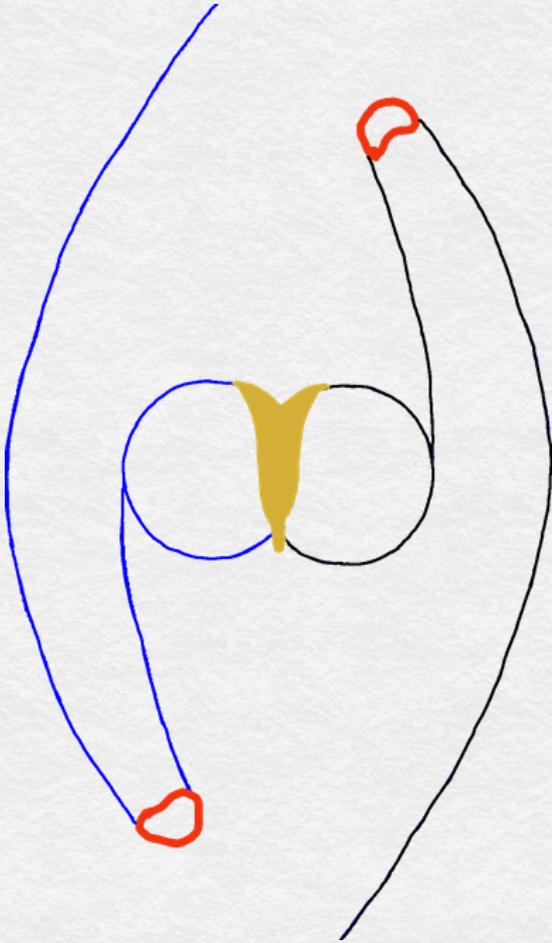


Your Inner Landscape

Home to You and
Your Divine Companion

Brief Summary



Your amazing inner world

Whether you are feeling sad or joyful, fearful or courageous, isolated or connected, stagnant or growing has much to do with your inner world. Deprivation or harsh external circumstances may have wounded you and spawned negative feelings, but your inner actions determine whether such wounds fester or heal. Without inner wisdom and care, negative feelings can linger long after the original damaging circumstances have passed. With wise inner caring, you can transform sadness to joy, fear to courage, isolation to connection, stagnation to growth. Or, if you have lost your motivation for living, wise inner choices can create a robust motivation which is more immune to disappointments.

An entire world pulses within you, a world that is home to your lowest human drives and your highest ideals; your likes and loves; your dislikes and hates; your views about life, both accurate and inaccurate. Your inner world is not an endless sameness, like one vast cornfield; your inner world has great variety, like a complex ecosystem containing hills and streams, forests and fields; an ecosystem that changes with the seasons and is affected by your actions. Life sages, both secular and spiritual, having explored the breadth and depths of the inner landscape, came to share a common view of the intricacies of your inner world. Their experiences and perspective may help you understand and cultivate your inner world.

William Blake said your inner world is like a stage where a great play is being acted out. You are the entire play; the stage (which is your mind with its mix of strengths and weaknesses), the cast of actors (your various personas, some helpful and others a hindrance), the stage crew, the script (your narrative about life) and the director who coordinates all these parts. Your play—your life—will be better with a good director who can repair the stage where it is weak, edit the script where it is confusing, and instruct the actors who don't understand the heart of the play.

Teresa of Avila said that your inner world is like a castle or a walled city with many dwellings, neighborhoods and residents. You are the entire castle with dwellings that range from simple to sublime (many possible states of mind); residents of the outer dwellings are very materialistic; residents of the inner dwellings are very spiritual. You are the mayor of the castle (your will) who establishes the values and makes the choices that determine how smoothly the castle functions. The mayor must make wise decisions if you are to make the most of the amazing resources of your interior castle.

A map of your inner landscape

An accurate map of your inner world clarifies life and helps you make good decisions; a distorted map of your inner world will confuse you and foster unhealthy decisions. Fortunately, you don't need to create a map of your inner landscape from scratch. Two kinds of master cartographers of the inner world can help you learn about your inner terrain: psychologists and spiritual trailblazers. Psychologists have mapped the parts of the inner landscape related to thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Spiritual trailblazers have mapped the parts of the inner landscape which foster an inner spiritual relationship with the divine person who dwells within you.

You need two eyes to perceive visual depth in the world around you. Your left and right eye each see the world from slightly different angles; your brain weaves these two

perspectives together into one integrated view that shows depth in the outer world. Likewise, combining the twin perspectives of psychology and spirituality helps you to perceive all the depths of your inner landscape. Although the two kinds of inner cartographers begin with different perspectives and use different vocabularies, they describe very similar inner features. Weaving these two perspectives into an integrated view of your inner world may help you correct inaccuracies about who you are; find a new ways to heal psychological wounds; and chart new paths that lead to living a more meaningful life.

A more meaningful life and more compassionate relationships begin with seeing your inner landscape more clearly, with embracing all the resources that lie within you.

The name "spiritual trailblazers" is used to indicate people who have personally built a strong bond in their relationship with God in the inner world. They may have initially been helped by the paths made by a religious organization or by a sacred text but they have gone beyond these starting points to blaze their own individual paths which enabled them to bond with the divine one who dwells within.

Although they may have developed new insights and original ideas, the heart of their spiritual experiences was the inner relationship, not ideas that sprang from it. In drawing close to God in their inner world and glimpsing some of God's wonderful character, they came to revere God with a love that transformed their inner world as well as increased their compassion for others in their outer world.

Characters in the inner landscape

Most inner cartographers, even from very different backgrounds, hold that your inner landscape is not a barren terrain. Rather, it is inhabited by three kinds of inner characters: your personas, your Decider-in-Chief, and Someone More than your human parts. One of the easiest and most detrimental mistakes you can make is assuming that only one character, a generic you, lives in your inner landscape.

Personas. You likely have a very clear sense of one or two of your inner personas, such as an Inner Critic or a People Pleaser or a Rebel, who dominates your inner landscape and drives much of your behavior in the outer landscape. A domineering inner critic may frequently and intensely berate you for minor shortcomings; you may then be timid about expressing yourself to others. A joyful inner persona may prefer

adventure and play over work. A rebellious persona may love to flaunt rules. Personas see life rigidly in simplistic terms and easily get into conflicts with each other; they need your assistance to understand each other and work cooperatively.

You may tend to think of your self as a single “you,” an inner landscape inhabited by only one character. If you are afraid, then that is the only emotion happening inside you. But it’s often more helpful to understand your fear as the emotion of just one persona – not all of you; this emotion is louder than others and dominates your inner atmosphere. If you invite other personas to join your inner conversation, then you will then be better able to tame your fear; when all your parts are participating and cooperating, you can respond better to the anxiety-provoking situations you encounter.

Carl Jung said your inner world contains multiple aspects, archetypes, such as the wise old man/woman, the child, the mother, and the maiden. Each archetype has its own myths (narrative) for understanding what is happening to you in your life and guiding you in how you should respond. If the myths of one archetype, such as the Caregiver or the Rebel, become your core myth, it excludes the valuable thoughts of the other archetypes. The myths of any one

archetype are small and limited; your life mission is to cultivate a larger, more expansive myth, to create your largest self.

Richard Schwartz said that your inner world is like a tribe or clan of poorly coordinated members who often act like immature children; they see life in simple terms and are very reluctant to cooperate with each other; your core mission is to provide leadership and help all of them live in harmony so you can live your fullest life.



The Core You

Decider-in-Chief. You are the steward of your inner world, not a passive observer, whose vital role is to harmonize and integrate all aspects of your inner landscape. You become a good inner steward – even an outstanding leader and coordinator – based on the quality of the decisions you make and the values you hold dear. If you are a thoughtful leader, your inner world will become a healthy ecosystem that supports you in living a larger life with more passion and compassion. But if you are a careless leader, your inner world can become a big mess that hinders you rather than helps you. Your inner leadership – your choices and values – can enhance or hinder your life. This leadership capacity of your inner landscape can be called your Decider-in-Chief.

Your Decider-in-Chief is the cultivator of the inner landscape. Many other names could be used to suggest this essential role, such as: the Owner of the Manor (or Owner of your Interior

Castle; or Mayor of your inner city) who makes the final decisions about how the castle is run; the Master of Ceremonies who manages your inner conversations and activities; the Ring Master of your inner circus; the author of your life story which is being written by your decisions; the director of the play being acted out on your inner stage; the DJ who curates the playlist of thoughts and feelings that are broadcast over your inner PA system; the internal parent who organizes and harmonizes your inner children and teenagers; the inner artist who can create either the uplifting or distressing thoughts that color your inner landscape

Your Decider-in-Chief's central responsibilities may be performed well or just barely executed. Your Decider-in-Chief's main responsibilities are prioritizing what you value, making decisions based on these values, acting in accordance with these values, and forging connections with others.

Psychologists use terms such as observing ego or executive functioning (meta-cognition) to describe the oversight functions of the Decider-in-Chief; spiritual trailblazers use terms such as self-awareness or will. The Decider-in-Chief personalizes these functions as an inner character distinct from your inner personas who sets your

core values and makes core decisions. This valuing/decision capacity is unique to a person; only a person can make major choices and change her or his life direction; an inanimate objects, such as a rock, has no capacity to make choices and change itself or the course of its life. This capacity is an amazing gift worth developing to the fullest.

Another person in your inner landscape

Divine Companion. Spiritual trailblazers also describe another character in your inner landscape who is “not you;” a character who is neither a persona nor your Decider-in-Chief, but a divine person who dwells alongside your human parts in your inner landscape. Many names have been given to this precious inner character, names that reflect the personal experiences of each spiritual trailblazer. The name Divine Companion indicates someone distinct from your own human parts who is a devoted and affectionate partner, a helpful and creative collaborator. Although trailblazers can teach you about your Divine Companion’s existence, you – like them – must discover that this kind and wise character a Divine Companion also lives in your inner landscape from your own personal experiences.

In contrast to your often pushy personas, your Divine Companion is usually quiet unless you intentionally seek out

your Divine Companion. Your Divine Companion is not aloof; quite the opposite, your Divine Companion is eager to build a relationship with you. But your Divine Companion deeply respects your wishes and waits for a sign of your interest before participating in your inner landscape. Your Divine Companion is always with you and available to you, but only becomes active when you have interest, desire and receptivity for this companionship.

Your Decider-in-Chief is the part of you who can invite your Divine Companion to participate more fully in your inner life. The spiritual trailblazers recommend humility and reverence as personal attitudes that signal to your Divine Companion that you are ready to get to know your Divine Companion better. Your Divine Companion very much wants to have a deep and supportive relationship with you, but awaits your decision that you too also want such a relationship.

As you might expect, many spiritual trailblazers experienced the presence of a Divine Companion in their inner landscape. But some psychologists, like Richard Schwartz, have also described finding a similarly wise and benevolent part within their clients who is extremely helpful in healing and growing. Schwartz describes this

“person” in your inner landscape as having eight qualities: calmness, curiosity, clarity, compassion, confidence, courage, creativity and connectedness. Your role is you cultivate an inner atmosphere that invites this indwelling person to assume leadership of your inner landscape and assist you in coping with the issues you face.

Different regions in the inner landscape

A good map is not simply a display of the location of various regions; it also describes the character and atmosphere of each different region. A good map also contains a guide that teaches you how to navigate from one place to another. A good inner map helps you grow from who you are now into a fuller person.

Your mind has different capacities that can be likened to different regions of your inner landscape which each have their own language and culture. Your verbal and music capacities are two examples. Your verbal capacity uses words to understand concepts and express yourself to others; your music capacity grasps melody, rhythm and other aspects of music to hear and create music. Each capacity is receptive (enables you to experience different facets of life) and expressive (enables you to create).

You use your musical capacity when actually listening to the Ode to Joy in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. You use your verbal capacity when listening to a lecture about that piece. Imagine that you have never heard the Ode to Joy; even hours of the most insightful lecture about it could only give you the faintest hint of the actual experience of hearing the music performed. But just a few minutes of hearing the symphony for yourself gives you a tremendous grasp of the music.

Your music and verbal capacities are quite distinct from each other; they have relatively little overlap. Verbal descriptions of music can never substitute for actually hearing music. Combining the symphony experience (grasped through your music capacity) with the lecture experience (grasped through your language capacity) may enlarge the sum total of your experience of the music.

"Maps can change a life, returning us to ...the poetic, to what is real. They can move us forward to what we didn't even know that we were looking for. A map can change a god-awful day or month, ruin a rut, give us directions home to our true selves, our lost selves, the traveler, the mystic, the child, the artist."

from *Hallelujah Anyway* by Anne Lamott; chapter 4

PARAPHRASE: A good inner map corrects the lies about who you are so that you can know the truth of just how wonderfully created you are. A good map will assure you that you are not alone in life, in your inner world, but that you are dearly treasured. A good inner map can help you see the amazing and wonderful possibilities that await you within your inner landscape if you cultivate it well.

Twin Minds

Among your multiple capacities is the capacity for receiving and discerning spiritual ideas. Just as in the example with music, actually experiencing spirituality is entirely different from reading about it. The dramatic difference hints that your mind has a spiritual capacity that is quite different from your other psychological capacities.

Psychological Mind. Your psychological mind has multiple mental capacities, such as language comprehension and expression, analytical reasoning, emotional processing, social interactions, musical and artistic appreciation and expression. These capacities help you cope with the material and social aspects of life. Your psychological mind is rich with thoughts and emotions that are geared to help you avoid danger and acquire the necessities for sustaining life. Some of your

psychological capacities may be dormant or contorted; others may be well developed. Your psychological mind is the portal through which you can enter your spiritual mind.

Spiritual Mind. Your spiritual mind has capacities – distinct from your psychological capacities – for comprehending the spiritual aspects of life, for grasping the “Something More,” the facets of life that are beyond life’s purely material aspects. Your spiritual mind has capacities for recognizing spiritual truth, receiving and reciprocating the divine affection, and becoming ever more capable of loving and helping others. Your spiritual mind, which has its own unique and rich set of thoughts and emotions, can initiate and deepen an inner spiritual relationship with the Divine Companion, your inner person who loves you and can lead you spiritually.

Just as you develop a fuller picture of human nature by listening to both psychologists and spiritual trailblazers, you also develop a fuller sense of who you can be by using all of your psychological and spiritual capacities. Both aspects of your inner landscape are essential and useful; both aspects can be greatly enhanced when they are integrated. Your psychological mind is not a part of you

to be despised; despising your psychological aspects only hinders developing your spiritual side. You can make much progress on the epic journey of life when your psychological and spiritual minds are unified and share a common desire to pursue a worthy goal. A balanced inner life that honors and harmonizes both parts is the key part of your epic journey.

Interior Castle Paraphrase-Poem

The Interior Castle is both a systematic model of human nature and poetic description of Teresa of Avila's inner spiritual experiences. Her evocative language expresses her desire to connect with a reader in a very personal way so that each person might have the experience of feeling the love and support of the Divine Companion, which Teresa calls her Beloved. This poem paraphrases some of her poetic thoughts, especially her hope that a reader would notice the spiritual dwellings in her or his inner castle.

Sisters and brothers,

You are like a castle, a city with many dwellings.

This castle (you!) is amazing and beautiful,

so beautiful that God wants to live in this castle alongside you.

The most amazing miracle in the whole world is God's strong desire to draw close to you:

God dwells right inside of you, appearing to you as your Beloved Companion!

Your Beloved Companion values you so much that your Beloved Companion insists on,

and will not desist from, residing with you.

And the greatest tragedy in this world is to be ignorant of this miracle.

Please never doubt the great value which God places on you.

Let this knowing – that a wonderful Beloved Companion resides with you – grow into assurance

that erases any doubts about the tremendous value of your castle (you!).

Interior Castle Poem

Like a castle with very different dwellings, you have very different parts.

I beg you to get to know the wonders waiting within your castle,

Explore all of it, especially your inner rooms.

The outer rooms of your castle are quite close to the world:

the aromas of the world easily drift in through the windows

With alluring smells that hint at pleasures just outside your castle walls,

enthraling come-hithers that can entrance you,

Pulling you towards faux pleasures that will never satisfy your hunger pangs

pulling you away from your inner rooms where treasures more true await your arrival.

Like a castle that is home to many, you are home to Someone More than you and your parts.

The inner rooms of your castle adjoin the central Shekinah where your Beloved waits for you

the fragrance coming from this innermost dwelling hints at the loveliness of the Inner Dweller.

You will know that you are in your inner rooms, near the Shekinah,

because they are permeated with an atmosphere of love and kindness.

Your inner rooms are so wonderful that you will forget yourself

and the scents of the world will lose their hold over you.

Be adventurous and explore the interior of your castle;

trust in the goodness of your Beloved, who loves you so much, and eagerly awaits your arrival.

Interior Castle Poem

You are like a castle with clear inner walls, as if made of crystal
that are designed to let your Beloved's light shine from the center into all rooms, all parts of you.
When you neglect the inner rooms, when you neglect your soul,
your castle walls gradually become covered in soot and deprive your outer rooms of this precious inner light.
The air inside your castle eventually becomes polluted
when you starve your dwellings of your Beloved's nurturing sustenance.
But as you spend time in your innermost rooms with Your Beloved,
the soot is washed from the walls of your entire castle and they become clearer.
Then your Beloved's light can shine from the center room into all the rooms, into all parts of you
And each of your many rooms will be transformed and greatly improved.
Never doubt how much your Beloved wants to clear your castle walls
wants to heal your wounds and nurture the best in you.
But the cleaning of the castle walls can only happen with your consent and your cooperation.

You are like a castle that needs tending and maintenance.
Care for your castle with reverence, faithfully reaching in towards your Beloved who yearns for you.
Attune your listening for Beloved's quiet voice, both tender and invigorating.
The doors to your interior rooms will open to you with your whole-hearted desire for God.
Always speak to your Beloved with the deepest reverence; be with your Beloved in profound humility.
In your humility, never lose respect for your castle which your Beloved clearly treasures so much.
Be filled with joy that the God of the whole universe lives within this castle (you!)
As a personal Beloved who craves your companionship, your trust, your cooperation – rejoice!

Inner cultivation

Your inner landscape is much like a garden that needs wise cultivation to get the most out of your inner plot of land, your mind. Your Decider-in-Chief is the part of you who cultivates your mind; your Decider-in-Chief's abilities determine what kind of fruits your inner garden produces. As a neglected garden produces many weeds, a neglected inner landscape produces unhelpful and even harmful thoughts and emotions that may sabotage you. A wisely cultivated inner garden produces thoughts and emotions that sustain you in difficult times and help you make use of opportunities that arise.

Your inner garden, your mind, is home to both psychological and spiritual plants. Two kinds of master gardeners of the inner world can help you learn inner gardening skills for each kind of plant. Psychologists focus on weeding out unhelpful thoughts and strengthening emotion regulation; desired

psychological fruits are often being aware of how your mind works and having healthy relationships.

Spiritual master gardeners focus on creating a garden that is welcoming to your Divine Companion. Such a garden begins with simply noticing that you have inner spiritual plants, assets easily shaded out by the more prolific psychological plants. Your spiritual soil, if cultivated, is perfectly suited to nourishing your fledging Divine Companion relationship which is nourished by dedicating space in your garden – by dedicating time in your mind – appropriate for such a wonderful relationship. Like nitrogen fixing plants that enrich the soil, spiritual infusions from this relationship can enrich your psychological soil and support compassionate relationships with other people. A wise steward cultivates both psychological and spiritual plants in the inner landscape.

The plants in a garden reflect what the gardener values most: perhaps vegetables over fruits or flowers over vegetables. The plants in your inner garden reflect what you value most: perhaps material concerns get the most headspace in your mind or spiritual values are elevated above material desires. A valuable tool for

cultivating your inner garden is how you allocate your time to either material or spiritual concerns. Spending time exploring and cultivating your spiritual capacities, you may reap a delightful crop of poise and kindness that flows from receiving your Divine Companion' precious love and inspires you to love others in the same way.

Harmony in the inner landscape

It's easier to cultivate your spiritual mind when your psychological mind is fairly settled – when your personas are in fairly close agreement on what they really want; when anxiety and other negative emotions aren't overwhelming you. It's harder to cultivate your spiritual mind when you are ambivalent, when anxiety is the dominating emotion, when some of your desires are at odds with others and your Decider-in-Chief has not made a final and dedicated decision about what you treasure the most.

Your psychological mind is the portal to your spiritual mind so a first step in cultivating your spiritual mind is harmonizing your easily divided psychological mind. When the psychological conflicts of your mind are settled, you are better prepared to whole-heartedly seek your Divine Companion; with an unsettled mind, you are more likely to form an ambivalent relationship with the Divine Companion.

A major part of stewardship of your inner landscape is cultivating a harmonious accord among your inner characters: your personas, your Decider-in-Chief and your Divine Companion. Harmony seldom reigns in the inner landscape without the conscious direction of your Decider-in-Chief because one or two inner primitive personas are usually quite domineering and badger the other personas into nearly complete silence. Your Decider-in-Chief can correct such imbalances of inner power; you (your Decider-in-Chief) can calm your inner turmoil by getting to know your inner characters better and appreciating the contributions and roles of each part. Fostering cooperation between your inner characters helps foster more compassionate and supportive relationships with others. Fostering inner psychological harmony creates a spiritual environment that is more conducive to knowing and cooperating with your Divine Companion.

Your inner landscape is like a country with many states; your Decider-in-Chief is like the leader of that country. With good insight and leadership, your Decider-in-Chief unite the states into a cooperative union and coordinate their efforts towards pursuing a common and

worthwhile goal. But a lazy or self-absorbed Decider-in-Chief provides such weak leadership that the states disrespect each other and struggle to assert their own agendas because they lack a unifying vision that guides and coordinates them.

Consecration: Elevating one value

Consecration is being clear on the one thing that you value more than anything else. Your highest value may change as you mature. When you were a child, you may have valued a certain role in your family, such as being the good child, the smart child, the rebel, the star athlete or the comedian. You knew from your first-hand experience how much that particular role got you and so you valued it above all other possibilities; it seemed to be the best path to being happy in life and being appreciated by others.

Over time, your originally-favored role may have felt constraining or provided diminishing returns and you began to value that role less because of your new experiences. You may have adopted a new and different role which your new experiences showed could lead to better connection with people and a greater sense of competence with things. Without even naming the process, you had consecrated, or elevated, that new role as being more valuable than all others.

You mind operates as if you have an inner Totem Pole of Values that displays what you hold dearest—the highest position—and what you like but would give up for your higher values. The positions on this Totem are often established without much deep thought.

You can only value what you have actually experienced, either first hand or vicariously. Limited experiences restrict the range of possibilities for what you consider valuable and you may consecrate a small thing as your highest value. Broader and deeper experience, especially in your inner world, gives more options so you are better able to consecrate something better in your place of highest value.

You value certain things more than others; one thing always sits atop your hierarchy of values. The spiritual trailblazers consecrated their minds to their Divine Companion: their relationship with their Divine Companion was their highest value. Their consecration began with exploring their inner world, discovering and getting to know their Divine Companion. As they savored the character of the Divine Companion, they naturally and effortlessly came to value their Divine Companion above all else in life; this place of highest value created their shared intimacy .

Consecrating your mind to one thing is consciously elevating that thing to the place of highest value so solidly above other things that you will continue to hold this value even when other things are very alluring and seem to offer a easier shortcut to happiness.

Compassion in the outer landscape

Cultivating your inner landscape is not meant to be a self-centered endeavor. A collaborative relationship with your Divine Companion heals and helps you, but it also deepens your compassion for others, especially for people who have been marginalized and forgotten. Ultimately, being a wise steward of your inner landscape leads to compassionately engaging with others in the outer landscape.

Spiritually derived compassion is different from secular altruism. Bernard McGinn uses the word *compassio* for the outer fruit that springs from inner cooperation with your Divine Companion. *Compassio* blends the qualities of tenderness and guts, or wholeheartedness. The tone of *compassio* is tender, gentle, meek, humble, and kind-hearted. Tenderness involves getting to know a person up close and

personal, not from a distance. Tenderness involves seeing people as God sees them with great sympathy and compassionate understanding, not as the world often sees them in a harsh and judgmental light.

The etymology of mercy, the closest synonym for compassion before it was coined about a thousand years ago, implies having guts, as in “it took guts to do that!” This meaning hints at the whole-hearted or all-in element of compassion. Deep *compassio* means being willing to personally do the hard work of drawing close to someone who was not initially appealing to you. *Compassio* compels you to personally go to a person and open your heart to him or her, even when this makes you vulnerable. *Compassio* is tender but certainly not wimpy.

Bernie McGinn is professor emeritus at University of Chicago Divinity School. His life work is making the writings of the Christian mystics more widely available. In addition to helping publish other people's work, he edited a seven-volume anthology of Christian mystics from certain periods and places. In a talk he gave in November 2018 to a Shalem gathering, Bernard said that deep

compassion was the hallmark of someone who has personally drawn close to God. Based on a lifetime of reading the original writings of spiritual trailblazers, he found compassion for those who are excluded is a consistent fruit that came from an authentic inner bonding with the Divine Companion. He doubts the authenticity of claims of personally knowing God that are not accompanied by compassion.

Interplay between the inner and outer landscapes

Francis of Assisi is famous for personally caring for lepers. He was initially extremely repulsed by lepers; he prayed that he could serve God but stay at a safe distance from them. His attitude seemed to create a boundary which kept him safe, but viewing some people as despicable had the deleterious side-effect of keeping him from drawing closer to God. As a result of an inner spiritual experience, Francis completely demolished his inner attitude towards lepers and came very physically close to them and personally ministered to their needs, such as washing their sores. And then God seemed to draw even closer to Francis and divine love surged within him. As Francis' *compassio* blossomed, many people were drawn to him and followed in his footsteps of service.

Such transformations still occur today. A woman with a vibrant prayer life offered herself to God's service in her prayers but asked to be spared working with poor and homeless people; like Francis, she found them too abhorrent to want to personally work closely with them. As she dialogued with her Divine Companion, her attitude softened and her heart opened with great love for poor and homeless people. Now she really enjoys serving homeless people in a very personal service; she delights in making friends with poor people; she misses them when, at times, she does not see them. Her inner relationship with her Divine Companion also grew by leaps and bounds as a result. Your inner life is intimately intertwined with your relationships in the outer landscape.

The Divine Two-Step. Spiritual growth is like a two-step dance: one step forward in the inner landscape followed by one step forward in the outer landscape. These two steps are repeated over and over. The dance falls apart when you take only one kind of step: either just doing inner work without serving or just serving without taking inner spiritual nourishment. If you make a step forward in your inner world (deepening your bond with your Divine Companion), you are being prepared for deeper and more helpful interactions with

others in the outer world, cheerfully serving with a compassionate attitude. And, if your interactions with others have the sweet tone of *compassio*, you are being prepared to receive even further spiritual infusions in your inner landscape. Although you may be unsure about your dancing ability for this Divine Two-Step, you can trust that your dance partner, the Divine Companion, is a flawless dancer who will lead you at every step if you allow your Divine Companion to lead you in the dance.

Dialogue and collaboration

Dialogue and collaboration build strong and healthy relationships between people; ideas are shared in a dialogue and actions are shared in a collaboration. In your inner world, together dialogue and collaboration create intimacy, a deeply shared life, with your Divine Companion.

Dialogue is a mingling of two minds in which each mind is changed by absorbing something from the other mind. You have a certain perspective before a meaningful dialogue and afterwards you hold a new broader and deeper perspective. Dialogue in a cross-fertilization of minds where the ideas and perspectives of each person build new ones in the other.

Dialogue in the outer landscape requires courage and caution because the other person may have distorted views or believe toxic ideas. In the outer landscape, you need wise boundaries to protect your mind from the intrusion of false thoughts which can be very harmful.

Collaboration in the outer landscape also requires courage and because the other person may be too bossy or too passive to be a good partner in the co-creative process. You need boundaries to protect yourself from domineering or passive partners.

Collaboration is a mingling of effort and action in which each partner contributes a unique piece to a joint creation, a co-creation; the result is impossible without the participation of each partner. Collaboration, or co-creativity, is a cross-fertilization of actions where the actions of your partner help you do things that you couldn't possibly do alone.

Dialogue and collaboration deepen when you can trust that the other person respects you: values what you think and appreciates what you do. Your trust grows through many interactions with your partner in which you get to know his or her character: dependability and insight into values.

But dialogue and collaboration with your Divine Companion in the inner landscape are very different; trust, not caution or suspicion, is needed. Your Divine Companion brings only good and true ideas into your dialogue; brings only a cooperative spirit and wise plans to your collaboration. You don't need to hold back in fear of being treated poorly by your Divine Companion. Your complete trust will deepen intimacy with your Divine Companion; the caution that can be so appropriate in the outer landscape only limits the growth of your relationship with your Divine Companion in the inner landscape.



Eavesdropping on inner dialogue

Many spiritual trailblazers used poetry to describe their inner spiritual experiences which they struggled to express in prose. James Allen wrote *The Divine Companion* in 1912, a book-length poem of the inner dialogue between himself (who he called Disciple) and his Divine Companion (who he called Master). The following paraphrase follows his format of eavesdropping in on an

inner dialogue; the Divine Companion's part of the dialogue is in bold italic font; the person's part is in regular font. This poem touches on concepts James Allen raised in his book but the words are extensively paraphrased. The poem imagines the inner dialogue of a spiritual trailblazer conversing intimately with her or his Divine Companion.

***I, your Divine Companion, have long dwelled in your heart
long before you knew me,
long before you could sense my presence,
or feel my influence, or "hear" my voice.***

You, my Treasured Tutor, have given me so many gifts but none exceeds this gift of your intimate companionship and the light you give so that I can see you in my inner world. You are my treasure, my dearest one.

***I am moved that you value our companionship above all,
more than the secondary gifts I bring,
more the "treasures" and pleasures of the world.***

You, My Majestic Lover, ask so little of me:
 ***simply that I consecrate you as my highest value
and yet you offer so much in return
 for my small contribution to our relationship.***
As I turn towards you just a bit, here and now,
And, in this moment, trust you like a child
I feel the warmth of your love pouring into my soul.
I feel the light of your thoughts clarifying my thinking.
Your kind approach has won my soul to you.
The joy of our embrace far eclipses any other pleasure.

Eavesdropping on inner dialogue

*I love getting to know you,
You are the desire of my heart.
I want to know the details of you, the one whom I created.
I am never aloof to you and your cares,
I created you so we could know each other in full, intimately.*

Before our embrace,
I could only guess at your personality and
I wanted to be the big boss of my inner landscape.
But after embracing you, my Tender Love,
I am sure of your beautiful character.
I've lost my desire to be the solitary inner ruler;
Please assume the leadership of my inner world.
I will gladly follow you wherever your direction leads.

*I am moved by your offer, my humble hearted love,
But I decline to be the solo ruler of your inner landscape.
I only seek cooperation, never dominance, never slavery.
Let us, together, lead your inner world.*

What greater gift is there?
That you, the most powerful one in all creation,
would divest yourself of every power you hold.
So that a creature can rule the inner world
hand in hand with the Creator
So that our relationship is firmly built on a love
that brooks no difference in our value.
That miracle beyond all comprehension:
that Creator values the creature as much as the Creator.

The spiritual trailblazers used many different names for the Divine Companion. Each name expresses a facet of the character of a Divine Companion. Each person you know has a unique character that defines who they are: aloof or interested, caring or callous, wise or shallow, cautious or courageous. The names given to the Divine Companion give a sense of the character of the Divine Companion. The names, as well as the tone of the

inner conversation, indicate the character of your Divine Companion: a kind tutor who teaches well, an advocate who elevates you, a loyal lover who will never abandon you, a wise collaborator for the hard times in life, a divine healer whose touch improves everything it reaches, the keeper of the hearth who always welcomes you home. Their experiences may encourage you to offer your trust to a person with such a wonderful character.

Eavesdropping on inner dialogue

*I value your life: please trust me and share it,
then together we will reach the Divine Consummation:
complete cooperation between the human and the divine.*

Before our embrace, I hesitated to trust you completely,
to share everything with you.

But my fears were completely unfounded.

Your presence only enhances me – never diminishes me.

Glimpsing the nature and fruits of our fledging cooperation,
I long to know the nature and fruits of our full collaboration.

*And, because you are whole-hearted,
we will eventually become what you have chosen:
a seamless collaboration which enables you to serve others.
You will eventually have what you desire above all else:
we will be so closely bonded that we will become one.
I will implant my heart within you, next to yours
So that you can feel my divine pulse next to your human pulse.
My heart will surely guide you along the path
That leads to our shared dwelling place
Where I eagerly wait your arrival!*

The spiritual trailblazers did not begin their lives engaging in such inner dialogues as imagined in this poem; the depth and quality of their relationship with their Divine Companion grew as they made wiser decisions and trusted their Divine Companion more. Earlier in life, some spiritual trailblazers were quite entranced by the pleasures of life and the splendors of their own mind. As they made small deposits of trust, their Divine Companion became clearer to them with each bit of trust. As they made decisions that reflected wiser values gleaned from their Divine Companion, they experienced ever deeper intimacy with their Divine Companion. Each time they trusted their Divine

Companion was like making a deposit into a spiritual account where even small deposits bear great interest; each deposit of trust deepened their inner dialogue with their Divine Companion.

Their experiences with inner dialogue may encourage you to attempt reaching inward so that you can see for yourself who dwells in your inner world and experience for yourself the character of your own Divine Companion: loving and tender, enthusiastic and vibrant, wise yet sympathetic. These traits of your Divine Companion are gifts that can help you trust enough to embark on the epic spiritual journey together.



Epic Journey

Being alive, being a person, means that you have been given a wonderful gift: an inner landscape capable of wonderful things. Your life includes an invitation, an opportunity to embark on what Jung called the epic journey. “Epic” indicates that it embraces the deeper meanings and higher values of life. The epic journey stands in contrast to the trivial journey through life, the path of ensuring that you have enough food in your belly, as many pleasures as possible, and a measure of protection from the world’s harshness.

The core question (quest) of your life is: which path will you take? Will you take the default trivial journey with its seemingly easier and clearer answers? Or the epic journey with a yet-to-be-discovered destination? The world’s great literature and myths encourage you to choose the epic journey because every culture really needs brave people to make that

journey and share what they learn. You take this journey by letting the deeper parts of yourself occupy center stage in your mind; by winnowing through your beliefs, keeping what’s valuable and discarding what’s harmful or useless; by trusting the wise guides and your own experiences. If you do these things, you will change the very fabric of your mind.

The great stories of the world encourage you to let the epic journey pull you out of your trivial journey, out of your ego, out of excessive focus on the material aspects of life. Some people may not hear the call to take the epic journey; others may hear it but lack the interest or courage to take the journey. If you are one of the few who is willing to undertake the epic journey, you will be helped by the accumulated wisdom of those who took their own epic journeys; their experience is valuable guidance and encouragement for your own journey.

Many guides in the outer landscape will offer you their narratives about God; such narratives are often, not always, quite dogmatic. Their thoughts and beliefs about God may help you get started in your search for God; or they may hinder you if they don’t act as a springboard to begin your own epic discovery of the God who dwells

within you. A belief system can never replace the actual experience of getting to know your own Divine Companion. The spiritual epic journey moves from second-hand knowledge of God to a first-hand experience of God; nothing surpasses personally coming to know God’s wonderful character and feeling God’s tender devotion for you.

Your One Precious Life

In her poem “The Summer Day”, Mary Oliver asks the question, “Tell me, what is it that you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” Simply and eloquently she expresses how your life is a precious opportunity for something wonderful, with a hint that you can seize that opportunity or waste it on something very bad or fritter it away on many trivial things.

The earlier lines in her poem suggest the importance of noticing, of seeing the miraculous in what may, at first glance, seem to be mundane and pedestrian. The spiritual trailblazers would ask you: Will you pay attention to your inner world or will you treat the marvels of your inner world as things of no value? Will you leave the treasures of your inner world undiscovered, unappreciated and unused?

Your inner landscape is a one-of-a-kind parcel of land, a precious and holy parcel of land. Only your inner landscape is uniquely capable of creating your one-of-a-kind contribution, the beautiful crop which can only come from your particular landscape. Will you be a good steward of your inner parcel so that your inner landscape produces that good fruit which can only be produced when you are a wise steward? Will you accept and cultivate the seeds offered by your Divine Companion that are custom-tailored to thrive in your inner landscape? Your crop, if wisely cultivated, will be useful for you (your inner world will feel better) and for others (your serve will improve). No one else has your exact combination of talents; no one else’s inner landscape can make what your inner landscape can. Mary Oliver, and spiritual trailblazers, would encourage you to tend your inner garden wisely.

Paraphrasing Mary Oliver’s question:
What will you decide to do with your one, precious inner landscape?

Paraphrasing one of Mary Oliver’s answers
from her poem “Life Instructions”:
Pay attention to your inner ecosystem.
Be amazed at the beauty and possibilities within you.
Graciously share, receive and give, your inner bounty with another.

The full book

This pamphlet is a snapshot of a longer book that can be downloaded at divinecompanion.org/download. The book is free of charge. The PDF file on the website is currently being edited so expect to see some typos. You can contact chyde@bioassessments.com for further information. Thanks!

The *Inner Landscape* book comes in three separate PDF files to make it easier to send them as email attachments. The PDF files can be read with Adobe Reader, Kindle, iBook, or PowerPoint.

The first part of the book describes your inner landscape from a perspective that integrates the contributions of spiritual trailblazers and psychologists. The second part of the book, in a separate PDF file, describes the various parts of the inner landscape in greater detail. The third part of the book, in a separate PDF file, describes practices that integrate spirituality and psychology for individuals, dyads and groups based on the inner landscape perspective.

Teresa of Avila described how a wonderful divine guest lives in the center of your interior castle and how, through fostering an attitude of humility and refining your desire, you can build a loving relationship with your divine inner guest. This guest can serve as a divine Inner Tutor who can make many things clearer to you and help you make wiser decisions. But the loving nature of the inner guest led Teresa to most frequently call this guest "her Beloved" to indicate the deep affection when she drew close and felt the embrace of her Beloved in her interior castle.

She felt her inner life grew with a quantum leap when she fully shared her inner world with her Beloved; she was certain that this experience was possible for anyone who made a similar inner journey. As her Beloved's affection kindled a deeper love for others within her heart and she reached out with great enthusiasm to help others find the same treasure who dwelled within them. She might say, "What a travesty to never know that you have such a wonderful treasure within you or to search the world for the treasure that is already so close to you!"