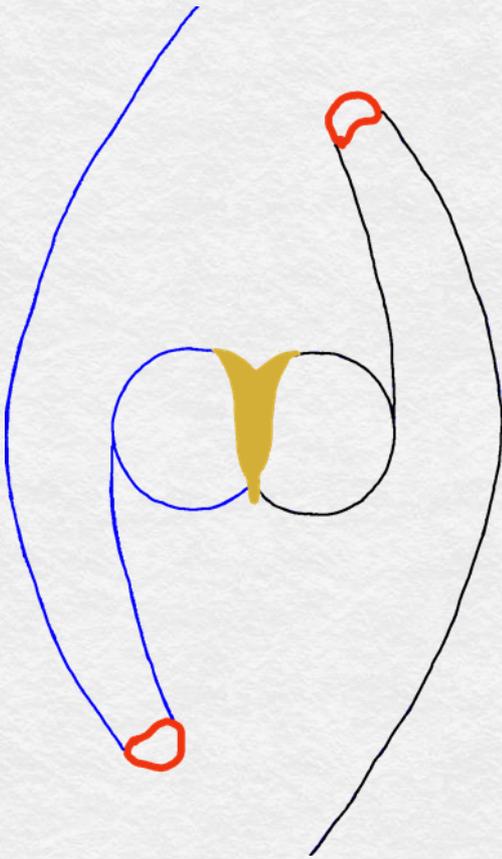


Your Inner Landscape

Home to You and
Your Divine Companion



Part 1

Notes for Downloading Book

This book, *The Inner Landscape*, consists of three separate PDF files which can be downloaded from the divinecompanion.org website.

This PDF file, **the first part**, describes the inner landscape as seen through the insights 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 emphasizing the importance of your values and decisions.

The **third part** of the book, in a separate PDF file, describes practices for individuals, dyads and groups based on the inner landscape perspective.

The three files use a fixed format book style so that illustrations and sidebars are displayed appropriately; the fixed format style means that the text cannot be resized and flowed like many e-books. The book is best read using an app on a computer or a tablet; this book will not display very well on a small screen like a phone. The book displays well when read with the Kindle reader program. It can be opened and read with a PDF reader app, such as Adobe Acrobat, PowerPoint using Read mode, or iBook.

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to Kindle” app which makes the book available on all your Kindle devices in one step. Or you can move the file to the appropriate directory (aka folder) by another means. Detailed instructions for downloading are on the DivineCompanion.org website.

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Your Inner Landscape: The I-Divine Companion Relationship
C. Hyde © 2021

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Acknowledgements. Many of the ideas in this book come from other people; no claim is made that these ideas are original. In a few instances, the ideas of other people are direct quotes from their writings (indicated by quotation marks) and credited to the authors. In most cases, the ideas of other people are paraphrased and credited to them in that paragraph; the paraphrase is intended to preserve their thinking from a larger work in a way that conveys a sense of the context that is communicated in a longer piece of their original writings. For the actual words of a quoted source, please explore the author’s original writings.

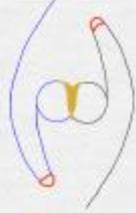
Many other statements in this book reflect the general perspective that is common to multiple spiritual trailblazers; such statements are not attributed to a particular source. References to the writings of the spiritual trailblazers who form the basis of this common perspective are listed at the end of the book.

The logo on the cover and chapter title pages is described in more detail in the DC logo booklet available on the divinecompanion.org website.

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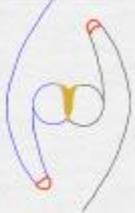
Your Inner Landscape
Home to You and
Your Divine Companion
Part 1



Introduction



**Your Inner Landscape:
Being a Wise Steward**



Interior Castle
Teresa of Avila's
Metaphor



**Inner Clan:
IFS Metaphor**



**The Epic Journey:
Jung's Metaphor**



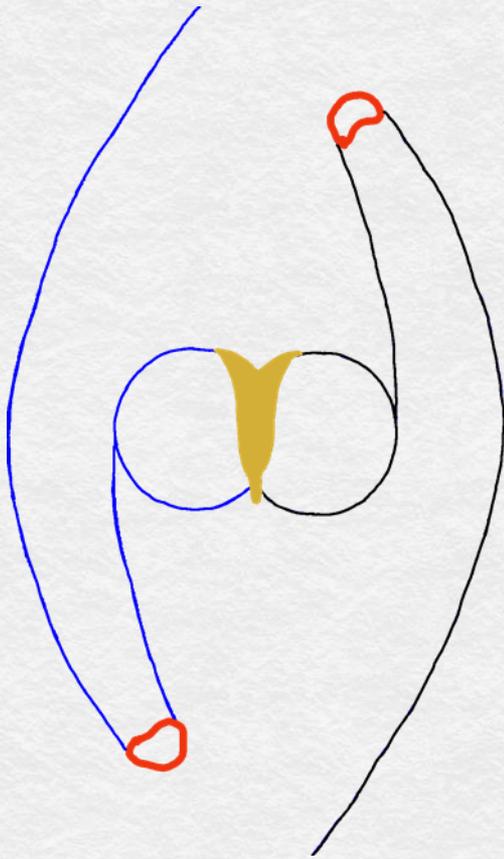
**Different
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Introduction

Introduction

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 choices in inner world determine whether your wounds fester or heal. Without your intentional inner actions, negative feelings can linger long after the original circumstances have passed. Wise actions in your inner world can transform sadness to joy, fear to courage, isolation to connection, stagnation to growth. If you have lost your motivation for living, wise inner choices can create a more robust motivation that is more immune to disappointment.

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 stream, forests and fields; an ecosystem that changes with the seasons and is affected by your actions. An entire world pulses within you, an inner landscape that is teeming with different parts and resources. This world is home to your most basic human drives and your highest ideals, your likes and loves, your dislikes and hates. This world is shaped by your views about life, both accurate and inaccurate. An accurate inner map helps understand your various inner regions and ensures that you don't miss some of the amazing resources within you.

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 (your mind with its mix of strengths and weaknesses), the various actors (your personas which are sometimes helpful and sometimes a hindrance), 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 direct the actors who don't fully understand the heart of the play.

Teresa of Avila said that your inner world is like a castle: a walled city with different neighborhoods with different dwellings and unique residents. You are the entire castle: dwellings that range from simple to sublime (your many possible inner states); the outer dwellings are very materialistic and the inner dwellings are very spiritual; the mayor of the castle (akin to your will) who makes the choices and determines the values that create the distinctive tone of the castle. The tone of your castle is more beautiful when the mayor encourages you to spend more time in your inner dwellings.



Two aspects of your inner landscape

Your inner landscape is home to both your psychological and your spiritual aspects. Your psychological aspects are your purely human attributes: your genetic inheritance and what you have learned through your life experiences; these aspects strongly influence the tone of your inner landscape regardless of whether you want it. Your spiritual aspects are the capabilities that are beyond your solo human abilities and accomplishments; these aspects can also be very powerful forces in setting the tone of your inner landscape but only if you desire their contribution.

The word *spiritual* is used to mean so many different things that it has lost any clear meaning. This book uses the word *spiritual* to mean “related to a human-divine connection” just as *psychological* means “related to a person,” *divine* means “related to God,” and *material* means “related to physical

things.” Marcus Borg (*The Heart of Christianity*) described the common core of all spiritual traditions as the conviction that life includes “something more” than the material aspects of life which, although it can easily be missed and neglected, is the heart of life. In terms of the outer world, a spiritual perspective maintains that you are not alone in your life on Earth; God reaches out to work with you as you face the issues that life entails. In terms of the inner world, a spiritual perspective maintains that you are not alone in your own mind; a divine partner accompanies you and invites you to collaborate as you face life’s challenges and opportunities. You have the option to accept this invitation and cultivate an intimate relationship with God in your inner world. Spirituality addresses the “someone more than your psychological parts” who dwells in your inner world and offers affection and collaboration.

Two eyes are necessary 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, you can see your life from a purely psychological

perspective or you can integrate the two perspectives—psychology and spirituality—so that you can perceive the depths of your inner landscape. This book weaves these two perspectives into an integrated view of your inner world so that you can perceive the full possibilities that your life holds.

Spiritual Trailblazers

Some people developed a very strong bond with God in their inner world; this bond transformed how they lived and engaged with others. They have been called mystics and contemplatives. These names have great meaning to those who are familiar with them but, for people who aren't familiar with them, the name mystic can conjure up images of the occult which is definitely not what it means in this context. And the name contemplative doesn't indicate what contemplatives are contemplating.

To avoid the ambiguity associated with these terms, the name *spiritual trailblazers* is used to indicate a person who has personally built a strong bond in his or her relationship with God. They may have initially been helped by the teachings of a religious organization or a sacred text but they went beyond such starting points and carved out their own individual paths. Although they may have developed new insights and

"Live carefully and intentionally because you may be the only Bible that some people read." This book imagines a sacred text that might be created from a thoughtful reading of the lives of the spiritual trailblazers: what they learned about their own inner landscape and the personal pathway leading to a deeper bonding

original ideas, the heart of their spiritual experience was their inner friendship with God, not intriguing ideas. In their inner bonding with God, they glimpsed some of God's wonderful character and came to revere and love God; they also came to have much greater compassion for others in their outer world, especially marginalized people who not valued by society.

The teachings of spiritual trailblazers from centuries past fit surprisingly well with many of today's psychological ideas, but their teachings are seldom part of current psychological conversations. This book integrates psychological knowledge (validated to some extent in research studies and accumulated psychotherapeutic consensus) with spiritual teachings (validated to some extent in sacred texts and the personal experiences of spiritual trailblazers) in the hope that together they may help you integrate the spiritual and psychological aspects of your life.

with God; the nature and character of the God who they encountered in their own experiences; the collaboration that blossomed as they devoted their lives to following God's will. This book imagines how the spiritual trailblazers might describe their experiences from the current psychological perspective.

Master Cartographers

The spiritual trailblazers and psychologists are master cartographers who can assist you in mapping your inner world, in knowing and appreciating all your inner parts. They are also master gardeners who can guide you in cultivating your inner ecosystem. The first two parts of this book integrate psychological and spiritual maps of your inner world. The third part describes hybrid psychological-and-spiritual practices for cultivating your inner landscape.

Inner Maps You may not have given much thought to the map of the various parts and many activities of your inner landscape. Your map of your inner landscape can be simplistic or insightful, accurate or distorted, narrow or more broad. The accuracy of your map matters a great deal. A limited understanding of yourself will handicap you in making the most of your life. An inaccurate map can easily

cause more harm than no map at all. But an accurate and comprehensive map can be very valuable in handling life's hard times and growing into the person you want to be. The various parts of your inner landscape are described using metaphors, like ecosystems and houses, to describe the nature and operation of various parts of your inner landscape.

Two kinds of master cartographers 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 understand your inner terrain: psychologists and spiritual trailblazers. Psychologists have mapped the parts of the inner landscape related to thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The spiritual trailblazers have mapped the parts of the inner landscape related to fostering an inner spiritual relationship with the Divine Companion dwelling within you.

Transference is when you use a map derived from your last relationship (which was likely an unhealthy relationship since you are no longer in it) to navigate your current relationship. This very human tendency is almost always a recipe for a relationship disaster. Likewise, using your prior relationship with an

unhealthy parent or authority figure as a map to understanding God or your Divine Companion will not help you very much. The inner maps of the master cartographers are a better starting point for seeing your Divine Companion more accurately so you can build a vibrant, healthy relationship.

Master Gardeners

Inner cultivation (choices) You are not a passive bystander in your inner world; your inner world withers or flourishes depending on your involvement. Your inner world might function adequately without much thought, but your active cultivation is necessary for it to be as vibrant and healthy as possible. Choices are the main tools of inner cultivation. Your “choices” can be little more than thoughtless reflex-like responses; just as a weak heartbeat can support life but just barely, such primitive “choices” will just barely nourish your psyche and spirit. Or your choices can be insightful and considered decisions that reflect solid values; just as a strong heartbeat will support strenuous activity in the body, wise and courageous decisions will support vigorous and robust coping with difficult circumstances that you face.

You are the only one who can be the steward of your inner landscape; that role cannot be outsourced to anyone else. Good inner stewardship requires making wise decisions in addition to knowing the map of your inner landscape.

Each garden has unique soil and needs tailored cultivation. Each person is unique and needs personalized cultivation of the inner world. The ideas and practices in this book are offered as

Perhaps you haven't taken your inner world seriously; such neglect often makes your pain and difficulties worse. But, at any time you want, you can raise the level of your inner stewardship to foster conditions that can heal psychological wounds, promote spiritual growth, enhance your relationships, and create a more meaningful life.

Two kinds of master gardeners Fortunately, you don't need to learn everything about inner cultivation from scratch. Two kinds of master inner gardeners can help you learn inner cultivation skills: psychologists and spiritual trailblazers. Psychologists focus on issues such as weeding out unhelpful thoughts, developing emotion regulation, harmonizing inner conflicts, and having healthy relationships. Spiritual trailblazers focus on deepening an appreciation of spirituality, prioritizing your values and nourishing your relationship with the Indwelling Spirit through attitudes such as respect for your inherent value, reverence for the divine, desire for what is holy, and willingness to selflessly serve.

guidelines. Please test them for yourself to see what fruits they bear in your own unique soil. If they are not helpful, consider other ideas and practices that may be better suited to you.

Three Dialogues

This book imagines three dialogues that weave together the psychological and spiritual aspects of your inner landscape. The first dialogue is between the fields of psychology and spirituality; the second dialogue is between you and a spiritual trailblazer; the third dialogue is with your Divine Companion.

The first dialogue explores how spirituality and psychology might enrich each other. Psychologists view human nature through the lens of scientific study and clinical observations. Spiritual trailblazers view human nature through the lens of sacred texts and an individual's inner experiences. These lenses are seldom integrated; sometimes the two approaches are quite antagonistic and even condemn the other. But considering these two lenses as complementary and integrating the two approaches may help some people in their struggles and their growth.

Dialogue is a way of connecting two minds, of cross-fertilizing one mind with ideas from another. Perhaps you've had conversations that really stand out because you connected and collaborated more deeply than you ordinarily do. Each person in a dialogue brings a unique contribution and the combination is something more than either one could have created alone. Such conversations stand out

This book imagines the first dialogue in the form of a friendly, collaborative conversation between a psychologist and a spiritual trailblazer who appreciate the value of each other's perspective. It imagines how a spiritual trailblazer, such as Teresa of Avila, might describe her view of human nature in *The Interior Castle* if she was alive today in a conversation with a psychologist, such as Richard Schwartz, the founder of Internal Family Systems school of psychotherapy. Teresa's side of the conversation represents her thinking as well as many other spiritual trailblazers from the past 20 centuries; Richard Schwartz' side of the conversation represents other modern psychologists who see each person as having multiple parts and an amazing, but often untapped, inner resource. A conversation between such a pair would likely be a lively and productive dialogue.

from other conversations that were more like two parallel monologues with little exchange of ideas. Deep dialogue takes effort and needs intentional cultivation but the expanded perspective that results may help you grasp what you couldn't understand before, grow in areas that stymied you before, and be compassionate in ways that you couldn't before the dialogue.

Three Dialogues

The second dialogue is a personalized extension of the first dialogue. Imagine having several personal conversations with a master cartographer who knows both the psychological and spiritual aspects of the inner landscape intimately, who also listens carefully to you and comes to know the particular details and atmosphere of your inner landscape. Imagine that this person tailors the conversation to the particulars of your life with deep compassion. Such a conversation would likely extend your inner map and help you develop new personalized ways of cultivating your inner landscape.

The third dialogue is the inner conversation, or self-talk, that happens in your mind. The quality of your inner conversations has a profound impact on your life: whether your experiences are enjoyable or miserable, whether your relationships are healthy or unhealthy. The quality of your

inner conversation can vary a great deal. At its lowest level, it can be mere chattering that allows immature decisions to stand unchallenged; at its best, it can give wise guidance for your decisions and actions. Perhaps your default inner conversation is more like a monologue that perpetuates inaccurate views, such as self-loathing or permanent victim identity. If so, changing your inner conversation may help you leave behind such self-sabotaging views.

An inner dialogue – as opposed to an inner monologue – is a powerful way to break the grip of long-lived but unhelpful ideas about yourself and life so that you can see the yourself and life more accurately and then act in healthier ways. The spiritual trailblazers' ideas can help you transform your inner conversation from a repetitive monologue into a more fruitful, dynamic inner dialogue with your Divine Companion.

This book imagines two external dialogues leading to the most important dialogue, an inner one. First, a dialogue between psychologists with spiritual trailblazers help you build a better map of your inner landscape. Second, a dialogue between you and a wise psyche+spirit integrator helps you address your personal

issues and potential. These two external conversations could become the springboard to a deeper dialogue with your divine Inner Guide, an inner dialogue that assures you of being loved and treasured, an inner dialogue may lead you to have the same heartfelt compassion for other people.

The Spiritual Trailblazers

There have been many spiritual trailblazers. Bernie McGinn has written seven anthologies with just a few pages to sample the writings from hundreds of trailblazers who left written accounts of their inner spiritual experiences. The following people are a few examples of spiritual trailblazers.

Desert Mothers and Fathers (200's AD) moved several-days walk from large churches; although they shared the same sacred text, they felt that the organization was a hinderance so they sought more intimate spiritual growth on their own.

Teresa of Avila (1515-1582 AD) was a Catholic nun who was greatly moved by the life of Jesus; she forged her own spiritual path, often upsetting some in her religious organization.

George Fox (1624-1691) spent years in long conversations with clergy seeking spiritual understanding without satisfaction.

He found clarity and solace when he experienced a guiding Inner Voice; he founded the Quakers for people seeking to cultivate the inner light that dwells in all people.

Martin Buber (1878-1965), raised as an observant Jew, became a philosopher and wrote about the deep authentic connection between two people which rests on a spiritual foundation of an inner connection with a personal spiritual presence.

Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was a Baptist minister who was a spiritual guide to the civil rights movement. One of his core themes was that you have to go in [for spiritual nourishment] before you go out [to promote social change].

The many different personal spiritual accounts of the trailblazers suggest that such experiences may be accessible to you. This book explores the common core of their experiences.

As you read a statement in this book, you might wonder "who says so?" Prefacing each sentence in this book with "The spiritual trailblazers taught that ..." would clearly attribute these ideas to the common core of the trailblazers' world view, but that writing style makes for tedious reading.

Although not always explicitly stated, please consider the statements in this book as paraphrases of the common core that emerges from considering multiple spiritual trailblazers. Their ideas were often poetic invitations to see yourself more clearly rather than dogmatic statements that can be fact-checked.

Evaluating an Idea for Yourself

Many ideas in this book come from respected thinkers. But that is not definitive proof that an idea is accurate and correct because thinkers never all completely agree on any topic. Science will not definitively validate psychological insights in your lifetime; neither will all religious organizations reach universal consensus on spiritual truths anytime soon. Yet you are faced with making psychological choices and spiritual decisions *now* without the luxury of certainty based on externally validated science or universally accepted religion.

Perhaps you have self-loathing, an intense hatred of yourself. Or you doubt your own thinking and are easily swayed by the opinions of unhealthy people. Or, after many traumas, you are consumed by anxiety about the world, certain that things will always go very badly. Some people have found the ideas to be a helpful guide as they faced similar issues. You can evaluate the ideas in this book in your own experiences without waiting for definitive external validation.

Much of this book is written in the second person to create a sense that someone, a spiritual trailblazer, is having a personal dialogue with you. The word “perhaps” is used throughout the book to suggest an example that might be appropriate to you; if

Do these ideas help you see yourself more clearly and understand how you think and feel and act? Do these ideas help you resolve an issue with which you struggle? Do these ideas help you create a more meaningful life? Do these ideas resolve some inner conflicts? Do these ideas bear fruit in helping your personality blossom and helping you to be of more service to other people? Do these ideas help you be more compassionate with others? These questions and your answers are yardsticks to assess the validity of the idea: how useful is this idea in helping you grow?

Throughout history, everyone has been in your shoes: each person has to make decisions without knowing everything about the topic. Is this food good or poisonous? Is this person a friend or a foe? Does this religion accurately portray God’s personality? What you choose makes a great difference in the quality of your life; you will make better decisions when you evaluate ideas carefully before choosing.

so, the associated comments might be useful to you. But, if that example doesn’t match your experiences, consider the associated comments as more appropriate for another person which may be more useful for understanding that person than yourself.

Limitations

Limitations It would be the ultimate hubris to think that the ideas in this book will be helpful to everyone. They won't. Or that the ideas in this book have infallible proof of their validity. They don't.

Although this book includes the thinking of many psychologists and therapists, it will disappoint you if you are only interested in psychological ideas that have been thoroughly scientifically researched and validated. Not all of the ideas in this book have been confirmed in randomized control trials or scientific studies using techniques such as brain imaging.

Although this book includes the thinking of spiritual trailblazers, it will disappoint you if you are only interested in ideas about human nature that flow from a certain sacred text and have theological approval of an established religious organization. Not all of the ideas in this book have the backing of a religious organization.

These limitations are offered to save you the time and distress of reading further.

Why write a book that has these limitations? Although a purely secular approach to life works very well for some, it doesn't address the needs of those who want to include their spiritual and psychological concerns in the same conversation. And vice versa: a strictly religious approach may work well for adherents to a particular sacred text, but it may mean very little to others who don't hold that particular text as sacred. This book may be most useful for people who want to integrate their psychological and spiritual experiences without devaluing either one. Respectfully integrating psychological and spiritual ideas may help you make an inner shift that you could not make from a strictly psychological approach or a strictly religious approach. As with all ideas, you should evaluate the ideas in this book with discernment to determine if they are genuinely helpful to you.



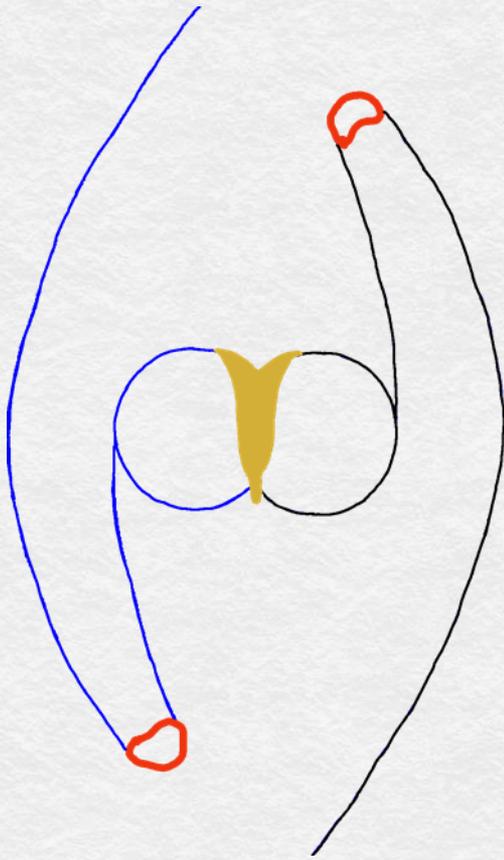
Disclaimer and Confidentiality

Disclaimer: Not a substitute for therapy Your particular needs can be very different from another person. For example, some people are very isolated because they are extremely suspicious of other people; they miss the wonderful benefits of healthy relationships. They might grow when they begin to trust more freely. Imagine the harm that might be done if such a person misinterpreted something in this book to mean that he or she should create even stricter boundaries with other people.

Other people give their trust too easily and indiscriminately; they are often hurt in unhealthy relationships when someone takes advantage of them. They might grow when they begin to trust with more discernment. Imagine the harm that might be done if such a person misinterpreted something in this book to mean that he or she should continue to be blindly trusting of all people.

These examples show how one idea may be helpful to some but harmful to others. For this reason, this book is not a substitute for individual treatment with an appropriate provider. Please consult a licensed mental health provider, a spiritual director or a religious clergy to assist you with individually-tailored assistance if you need that.

Confidentiality When a person or a personal experience is described in the book, the description is actually a composite of several people with similar experiences; any personal description is not based on one particular individual. Composites descriptions are used in this book to protect the confidentiality of particular individuals who have described their own experiences to the author.



Your Inner Landscape: Being a Wise Steward

Your Inner Landscape

Your inner landscape is like a complex inner ecosystem that has different ecological zones inhabited by several forms of life. If it is well cultivated, your inner landscape can be a fertile source of ideas and values that support you in your endeavors; or, without cultivation, it can be barren or overrun by noxious weeds of erroneous thoughts that choke out your better impulses. The state of your inner landscape powerfully influences how you feel and it reverberates, for better or for worse, into your outer landscape where its effects are seen and felt by the people you live with and work with.

You play a crucial role in your inner ecosystem: you are the steward of your inner landscape. Your skill at the inner cultivation of your mind influences the quality of your life. Your many decisions, or indecisions, shape your inner landscape into a source of strength and solace or a morass that hinders how you adapt to life's many demands.

An accurate map is a essential for reaching your ultimate destination; an inaccurate map can exhaust your energies as you pursue dead-ends and wander through life aimlessly. An apt metaphor fosters a deeper understanding of yourself and wisely

A good steward of the inner landscape develops an accurate inner map, understands and harmonizes the inner inhabitants, and prioritizes good values.

The idea that you have a complex inner landscape may at first seem strange or unfamiliar. Your inner landscape is not a homogeneous terrain like a never-ending cornfield on the vast plains. It is more like a complex ecosystem with several different regions that are each suited for certain kinds of life, like the north-facing slopes of a forest that are more conducive for certain plants than the south-facing slopes. For all its influence, you may be unaware of some or much of your own inner territory. *The first step in becoming a wise steward* is to create an accurate map of your inner world. The spiritual trailblazers taught that your inner landscape has two major regions: your psychological mind and your spiritual mind; each has different capacities and unique mental processes suited for handling different aspects of life.

directing your growth; an inappropriate metaphor can lead you astray with incomplete self-concepts and stunt your growth. A landscape with diverse regions or a house with unique rooms are core metaphors for your inner world.

Twin Minds

Psychological Mind. The various mental capacities of your psychological mind are fairly obvious: using language so you can understand others and express yourself; using analytical reasoning so you can build homes and grow food; processing emotions so that they guide you but don't dominate your actions; understanding social interactions so you can form healthy relationships and manage unhealthy ones. These capacities help you cope with the material and social aspects of life. Your psychological mind is rich with thoughts and emotions which help you avoid danger and acquire the necessities for sustaining life. Some of your psychological capacities may be dormant and others may be well developed. Your psychological mind is also the path that leads to your spiritual mind.

Spiritual Mind. The existence of your spiritual mind may be less obvious but you have capacities – distinct from your psychological capacities – for comprehending the spiritual aspects of life, for grasping the “Something More,” those aspects of life which are beyond the purely material aspects of life. Although more difficult to describe than your psychological capacities, your spiritual mind has capacities for recognizing spiritual truth, receiving and returning the divine affection, and becoming ever more capable of loving and helping others. Your spiritual mind, which has its own rich set of thoughts and emotions, which are analogous to, but distinct from, your psychological ones. Your spiritual mind allows you to bond with the “Someone More” who is lives in your inner landscape.

“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 uncovers 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 and that you are dearly treasured. A good inner map can help you see the amazing and wonderful possibilities lie within your inner landscape if you cultivate it well.



Inner Characters

The second step in becoming a wise steward of your inner landscape is to understand the various characters who inhabit your inner terrain. Your inner landscape is not a barren terrain; it is populated by three kinds of inner characters: your personas, your Decider-in-Chief, and your Divine Companion. Perhaps one of the easiest and most detrimental mistakes is to think that only a single character lives in your inner landscape.

Personas. You likely have a very clear sense of one or two of your inner personas. You may have a persona, such an Inner Critic or a People Pleaser or a Rebel, who dominates the views of your inner landscape which then drive much of your behavior in the outer landscape. You may have a dominating inner critic who frequently and intensely berates you for shortcomings and failures, no matter how minor. Perhaps you have a fun-loving persona who is very joyous and prefers adventure and play over work. Your inner personas usually

You may tend to think of your self as just simply “you,” an inner landscape inhabited by only one character. If you are afraid, then that is the whole of what is happening inside you. But it is often more helpful to see such an inner state such as fear as only one part of you who is afraid in this moment and is dominating your

dogmatically hold simplistic views. They easily get into conflicts with each other; they need your assistance to understand each other and work cooperatively.

Decider-in-Chief. You are not a passive observer of your inner world: you play a vital role in cultivating all aspects of your inner landscape, in integrating your diverse inner parts. You can be a good inner steward – a thoughtful leader and coordinator – depending on the quality of decisions you make and the values you hold dear. If you are an insightful leader, your inner world can 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. Your leadership role in your inner landscape can be called the Decider-in-Chief.

inner atmosphere. A many parts perspective helps you tame your fears by giving other personas inside you a chance to be included in your inner conversation; when all your personas are participating and cooperating, you are better able to respond to the anxiety-provoking situations you encounter in life.

Inner Characters

Divine Companion. Spiritual trailblazers teach that you also have another character in your inner landscape who is different from your personas: a Divine Companion who is not part of the human you but who is a divine person who dwells alongside your personas in your inner landscape. The Divine Companion is consistently described as a devoted and affectionate partner, as a helpful and creative collaborator. The Divine Companion is loving and supports your continual spiritual deepening. The trailblazers believed that everyone has an indwelling Divine Companion although not everyone cultivates a relationship with their Divine Companion.

The name *Divine Companion* emphasizes that the Divine Companion is present as a person, not as an aspect of your mind that lacks a personality. Your Divine Companion is intimately involved with your mind but is not a part of your human personality; if you want, you can divorce your Divine

Companion but you cannot separate yourself from your personas, your Decider-in-Chief; you cannot disown your innate capacities, such as language or emotional processing.

In contrast to the often pushy personalities of your personas, your Divine Companion is usually quiet until you intentionally seek out your Divine Companion. Your Divine Companion is not aloof; quite the opposite, your Divine Companion eagerly offers an invitation to you to collaborate. But your Divine Companion deeply respects your wishes and awaits your response to the invitation before becoming more involved 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. Your Divine Companion respects your choice very much and allows you to determine how much the two of you will cooperate.

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

describes this part as having eight qualities: calmness, curiosity, clarity, compassion, confidence, courage, creativity and connectedness. You can cultivate an inner atmosphere that invites this part to lead your inner processes and facilitate healing conversations in your inner landscape.

Harmonizing your Inner Landscape

The third step in becoming a wise steward of your inner landscape is to cultivate healthy relationships among your inner characters. Harmony and balance seldom reign in the inner landscape without the awareness and conscious direction of the Decider-in-Chief. Usually, some inner personas are quite domineering while other personas have been badgered into near complete silence. Your Decider-in-Chief can mediate better inner relationships by reducing the misunderstanding and needless friction between different personas. As you get to know your inner characters better, you will be better able to calm inner turmoil; restoring inner harmony makes the resources of each persona more available. Fostering cooperation between your inner characters is the foundation for fostering more compassionate and helpful relationships with others. A wise inner steward also harmonizes the psychological and spiritual minds so that your more subtle but very helpful spiritual resources aren't wasted.

The level of inner discord our inner landscape can either remain harden or soften. Your inner guidance is required to create a harmonious inner landscape grows in which all parts are respected and integrated. Without your guidance, your inner landscape will crystallize in its current discord and ambivalence. Perhaps the saddest fate of an inner landscape with such great potential is when the Decider-in-Chief stops cultivating inner harmony so that the inner atmosphere no longer supports psychological and spiritual growth.

The quality of your inner stewardship will be felt in your outer relationships. Unresolved inner issues usually negatively flavor your outer relationships. A good steward who has resolved lingering inner issues is better prepared to have to healthy relationships with other people, to have I-Thou engagements. Ultimately, a wise steward who harmonizes the inner landscape can have more meaningful and harmonious interactions with others.

Your inner landscape is like a country with many competing states (your personas who are each striving to be the dominant leader of your inner world). Your Decider-in-Chief is like the leader of a country, who with good insight, can bring the various states

together for the common good. But a lazy or self-absorbed Decider-in-Chief won't provide adequate leadership and may abandon the states to their own devices as they struggle without an overarching vision that guides the inner landscape.

The Inner-Outer Landscape Connection

Your inner landscape is not sealed off from the rest of life, the outer landscape. Although these two landscapes are distinct, they are closely linked by a two-way connection. Your outer landscape – your life circumstances – can shape your inner landscape: your experiences shape how you see yourself, the world and other people. The inner-outer landscape connection also flows in the opposite direction. Your inner landscape – your values and decisions – can shape how you respond to adversity and to advantageous circumstances, how you connect with or disengage from other people.

The Outer Landscape influences the Inner Landscape. Your view of your self is likely formed and strongly influenced by how others see you. Often other people may define you by observable characteristics, such as your appearance or status, your strengths and weaknesses, or your usefulness to them.

The opinions of others (the outer landscape) can powerfully contaminate your thoughts and feelings (your inner landscape). Often the negative opinions of other people have more influence than positive opinions of others. You may re-experience, with great intensity, humiliating incidents that happened within an unhealthy family or with a bully at school. You may replay these

Based on what people can observe about you in the outer landscape, they may think of you as a pushover or a leader, as capable or incompetent, as valued or shunned. They will treat you in accordance with how they see you. Especially in your family and close relationships, other's views of you can easily become your own view of yourself.

Over time, you may come to define yourself by your observable characteristics and others' opinions rather than by your own experiences in your inner landscape; often negative viewpoints of others are more easily absorbed than positive viewpoints. The soil of your psychological mind can sometimes be too accommodating to the harsh and erroneous views of you that some unhealthy people hold. Many problems stem from allowing distorted and incomplete views of yourself to take root too deeply in your inner landscape.

memories so often that they now seem to be part of you and no longer seem to be something that you acquired from others. But, at any time, you have the option to spend time with these biased thoughts and feelings and replace them with more accurate views of yourself; your Divine Companion's views about you may be especially helpful in revising your sense of who you are.

The Inner-Outer Connection

You can inoculate your self-view against contamination from the errors of others by shaping your self-view based on your own experiences in the inner landscape, especially your spiritual mind. The soil of your spiritual mind only harbors truth about who you are and your true value. The continued presence of your Divine Companion shows how precious you are in the eyes of your Divine Companion, the perfect lover and the wisest tutor. Allowing your Divine Companion's views about you to take root can help you weed out false ideas about yourself absorbed from other people and cultivate a more accurate sense of yourself.

The Inner Landscape influences the Outer Landscape. Just as the outer landscape can strongly influence your inner landscape, the opposite is also true: your inner landscape will

strongly influence your outer relationships with others. If you have internalized a view of yourself as inferior, you may act like a doormat who tries to appease other people in overly dependent relationships. If you internalized a view of yourself as superior to others you may dominate others to get things from them with a transactional approach to relationships (“What’s in it for me?”). Your view of yourself is a key part of the inner template that guides how you form relationships. Your templates for relationships may last for decades after they first formed early in life; they continue to be active in your current relationship, even when it is vastly different from the original relationship in which the template was forged. Error-filled ideas about yourself and others can have a long half-life in your inner landscape.

If you were born as a person of a despised minority or an unvalued gender, your inner landscape may have absorbed very negative views about yourself. In an ideal world, these social ills would be immediately corrected but, in our far-from-ideal world, these circumstances will unfortunately take much time to change. Working to make these changes is important. Some black people

who were violently attacked simply for the color of their skin, such as Howard Thurman and John Lewis, found that you can also find spiritual solace and profound inner healing for the wounds inflicted by the world. This inner work was the foundation for much of their wonderful outer work. Their inner landscape was a powerful tool for coping with the ills of the world.

Fewer Inner Limitations

Your outer landscape may be very bleak due to poor health or disease; loss of family and friends; poverty; powerlessness; material insecurity; natural disasters; a dysfunctional family of origin or unhealthy current relationship; or trauma from war or other experience. You may have very limited influence to change the larger circumstances in your outer landscape, such as poverty and oppression.

But even when you are extremely constrained by dire outer circumstances, you have less constraints, more freedom, in your inner landscape. Even when you are virtually helpless and unable to impact your external circumstances, you can be powerful in your inner landscape. You are still able to grow and nourish a closer relationship with the indwelling Divine Companion. Knowing and tending your inner landscape may help you cope with the harshness of life, not as an escape but as a way to be creative and powerful in the inner arena that is beyond the reach of the harmful people and limitations that

may dominate your outer world. Although harsh circumstances may limit your options in the outer world, you still have real possibilities for growth and connection – perhaps not yet recognized by you – in your inner landscape.

Inner influence is different from outer influence. Having outer influence often requires that you have the right social position or material circumstances. But your inner influence is completely separate from your social standing or your material affluence; some individuals had great inner influence although they had no outer standing or lived in extremely harsh outer circumstances. Your inner influence grows as your insight and values deepen and you make wise decisions; your inner influence grows as you become more able to discern ever deeper levels of meaning; your inner influence grows as you remain loyal to your deepest values in difficult situations. These inner options are open to you even when outer options are closed by poverty or other limitations.

Victor Frankl could endure the extremely harsh conditions of the concentration camps because he cultivated an active inner life and nourished his dream: to teach and share his view about human nature and therapy with others.

During a very cruel captivity that nearly killed him, John of the Cross cultivated a very fertile inner atmosphere and wrote a heart-stirring poem about his inner spiritual experiences that many people have treasured for centuries afterward.

Your One Precious Life

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, her question expresses how your life is a precious opportunity for something wonderful, with a hint that you can seize that opportunity, waste it on something very bad, or fritter it away on trivial things.

The earlier lines in her poem suggest that appreciating the preciousness of your lifetime begins with paying attention to what may at first seem to be mundane and pedestrian. Her question might be rephrased: 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?

Some plants will only grow in certain kinds of ecosystem; these plants will be lost if their particular ecological niche is destroyed by poor care. Likewise, 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-and-only contribution, your beautiful crop which is useful for you and perhaps for others as well. Mary Oliver’s question might be rephrased: Will you be a good steward of your inner parcel so that it produces that good fruit which only you are capable of producing when you are a wise steward? No one else has your exact same inner landscape, that unique combination of talents and capacities; no one else’s inner landscape can produce the fruits that your inner landscape can. How precious when your precious inner landscape is well cultivated and fruitful!

Paraphrasing Mary Oliver’s question:

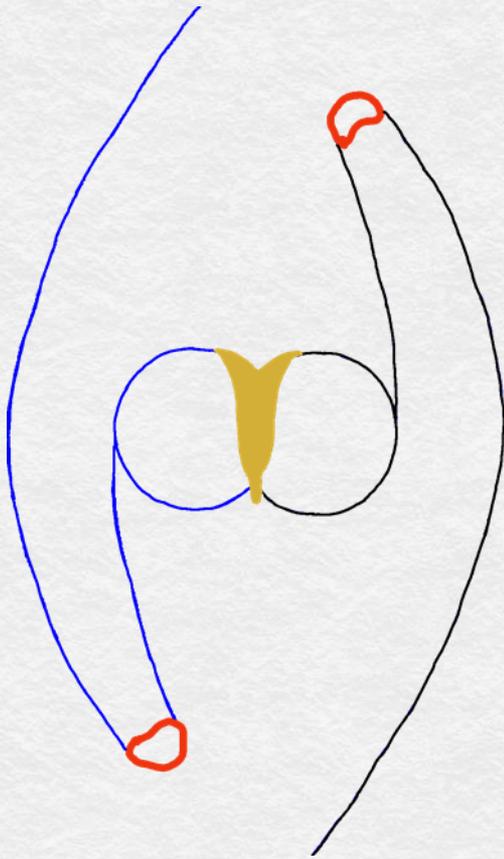
What will you decide to do with your one, precious inner landscape?

Paraphrasing her answer (from “Life Instructions”):

Pay attention to your inner ecosystem; notice your parts.

Be amazed at the beauty and possibilities within you.

Graciously share—receive and give—inner bounty with others.



Interior Castle

Teresa of Avila's Metaphor

Teresa's Castle Metaphor

Teresa of Avila grew up and lived near Avila, a walled city in Spain that was essentially a very large castle – a walled compound with many dwellings, neighborhoods and residents. Each part had a distinct purpose and trained people to operate it; for example, a smithy worked in a forge forming metal; a groom worked in a stable caring for horses. Some of the castle's capacities were better developed than others; some trades people were more skilled than others. The mayor or owner of the city-castle led it, determined how things were done and set the tone for how people related to each other. The owner of the castle might be a wise leader or a foolish leader. A castle teemed with a rich and complex life: unique characters continually interacting with one another.

Teresa chose a castle as her metaphor for your inner world. Just as physical castle is home to dwellings whose inhabitants have different views and skills, your inner world is home to

multiple parts that hold different perspectives on life. These parts can be divided into two categories: those with views prioritizing secular concerns and those with views prioritizing sacred values. Some dwellings may be well developed and useful but others may be dormant and unharnessed. Some of your inner characters who live in these inner dwellings may be helpful to the smooth inner workings of the Interior Castle while others may be disruptive to the harmony of the castle.

A wise lord of the manor would know each dwelling and neighborhood and the capabilities of each castle resident; a wise owner of a castle would also be familiar with the full extent of the valuable information in the library and chapel. You become a wise owner of your inner landscape when you come to know each region and every character in your inner landscape so that you understand and utilize your valuable inner resources and ensure that none are wasted.

Your first understanding of yourself is often incomplete: it may only include your most obvious psychological parts but not all of your capacities. Your first map of your inner landscape may not have included even hint of your spiritual capacities or of the

Divine Companion who dwells within you. Teresa's Interior Castle metaphor is a map metaphor that highlights the many different dimensions of your inner landscape, both the psychological and spiritual capacities of your inner world.

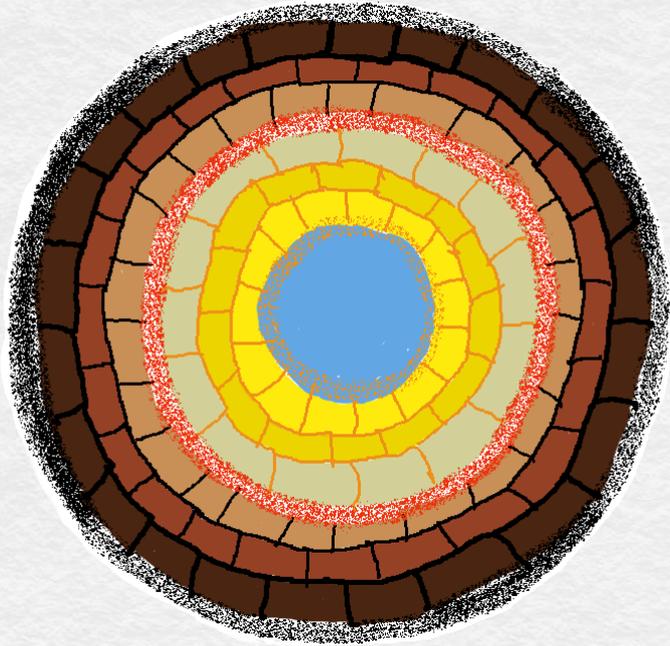
A City-Castle



This picture shows a huge castle, the walled city of Carcassonne in France. The walls were built over a long time: the first ones were built in Roman times; new walls were added over the next thousand years. Within the castle walls are many homes, a church, an amphitheater and a central castle-within-a-castle for the lord of the castle protected by its own moat.

At various times, the city-castle was held by Romans, Visigoths, Muslims, and Christians. One tower was the center of Inquisition operations; all nonbelievers were evicted. Monks and nuns lived on the outskirts. The great city fell into such ruin that extensive rebuilding was needed in the 1800's. (picture from Wiki Commons)

Map of your Interior Castle



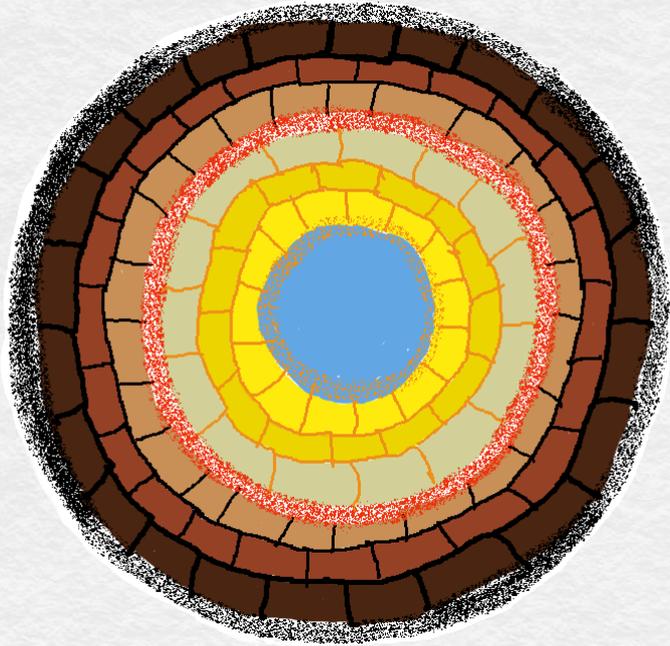
Teresa's castle metaphor can be visualized as bird's eye view of a circular castle with the dwellings arranged in concentric rings. Each rectangle represents one of the dwellings in your Interior Castle. Your inner world has two main zones, like neighborhoods of a castle: your psychological mind which is represented by the outer three brownish circles and your spiritual mind which is represented by the inner three yellowish circles. The different colors within each zone represent varying levels of maturity and insight in your psychological and spiritual minds.

Other people and the world (the outer landscape) are outside of the largest circle; you interact with them in your outer courtyard (the outer stippled black circle). In the blue dwelling in your very center is the inner courtyard, a sacred place where you can you embrace your Divine Companion. Your castle is home to influences from both the material world (outer courtyard) and from God (inner courtyard); you are the meeting ground between the material/psychological and the spiritual aspects of life.

Teresa described each dwelling as having its own unique characteristics and unique ways of operating. The different colors suggest a shift in the values and processes as you move from dwelling to dwellings. Brown, the color of soil, suggests a

predominately materialistic and worldly perspective, often called the ego by many writers. Yellow, the color of light, suggests a combined human and spiritual perspective. Blue, the color of the sky, suggests a purely divine perspective.

You Move from Dwelling to Dwelling



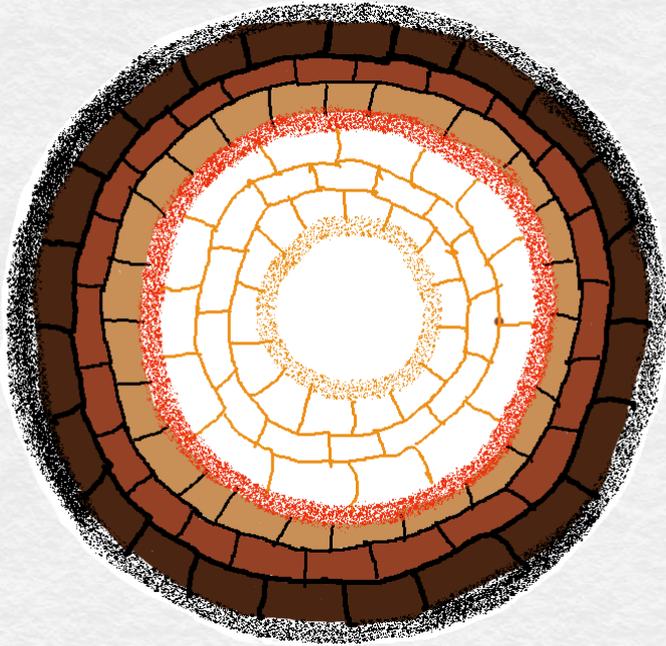
You don't occupy all the dwellings of your castle at the same time; rather, you move from room to room as your mindset shifts from moment to moment. You likely spend most of your time in a few favored dwellings, the ones you value the most. You may spend far less time in other dwellings; you may have never even visited some of the dwellings in your Interior Castle. You move to those dwellings with the perspective which you value the most.

In your psychological mind (the outer three circles), ego-driven psychological needs and drives are valued more highly. In your spiritual mind (the inner three circles), spiritual desires and ideals are valued more highly. These two inner neighborhoods are radically different. You reach a tipping point in your inner life when you spend more time in the inner dwellings because you value spiritual interests more than psychological concerns; then your spiritual mind is more able to cooperate with nourish your psychological mind.

The interior castle represents all of your human aspects. Your interior castle is home to your many facets and attitudes accumulated from many experiences in the world (sometimes ideas take up residence as the result of a hostile invasion). And your castle is also home to Someone other than you: your Divine

Companion. Exploring all the corners of your castle leads not only to self-discovery but also Spirit-discovery. The Beloved Companion resides quietly in the center of your castle until you meet your Divine Companion there and then invite your Divine Companion to participate in all areas of your inner life.

Psychological Mind: Outer Dwellings



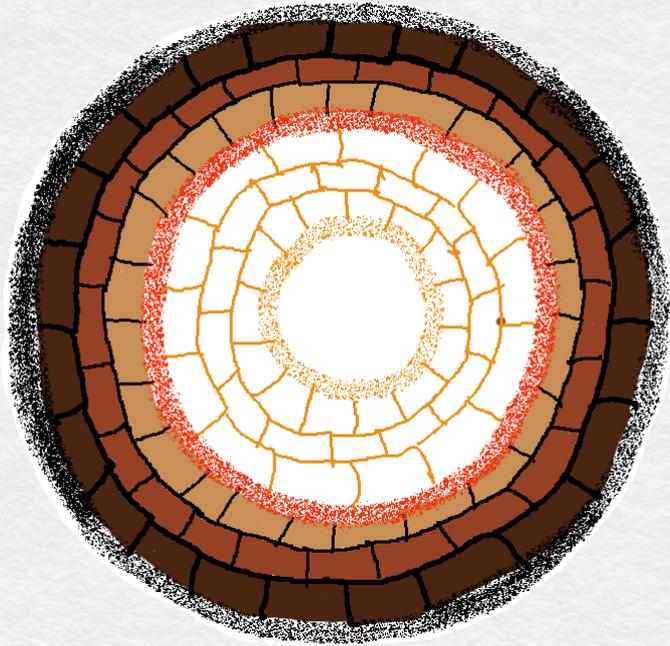
The brown outer three layers of the castle represent your psychological mind, your capacities for dealing with the material and social aspects of life. Concerns with survival and social acceptance predominate in your psychological mind. Your psychological capacities can range from very immature to quite developed.

The different shadings of brown in the illustration represent different levels of psychological maturity. The outermost dark brown ring represents Dwelling 1 of Teresa's *Interior Castle* which is a very concrete way of understanding yourself and life, a very primitive perspective that readily sees others as adversaries, which feeds your anxiety and greenlights your aggressive impulses. The next intermediate medium brown ring represents Dwelling 2 which is a more mature way of understanding yourself and life. The very inner light brown ring represents Dwelling 3 which is the most insightful way of understanding yourself and life; the Dwelling 3 perspective is the foundation for being interested in getting to know other people and trusting that together you can build cooperative relationships with some of them.

The psychological mind is sometimes described in negative terms, such as the False Self or as a demonic ego that needs to be annihilated. Teresa of Avila lovingly calls your psychological mind your "Sacred Humanity;" your imperfect nature that is very much

loved by God. She swooned with delight at discovering that her far-from-perfect self was so treasured by her Divine Beloved. She invites you to see how God dearly loves all of you, even the less-than-perfect aspects of your psychological mind.

Choices and Inner Movement



You move between the various dwellings – the various depths of insight – of your psychological mind by the choices you make.

When overwhelmed by stressful circumstances, you may respond from a Dwelling 1 perspective. You may choose to believe that the world is fraught with danger, a choice that fosters fear. Or you might choose to believe that people will only hurt you, a choice that leads to isolation or aggression. Stressful circumstances can exert a powerful pull that seems to hold you in Dwelling 1 frame of mind in which all other ideas seem inadequate; but you still can choose to override this powerful pull of stressful circumstances.

A robust Decider-in-Chief is prepared to resist the pull of Dwelling 1 and choose to move to Dwelling 3, the perspective that responds to stressful situations with deeper understanding for responding to dangerous situations with courage; to unfairness with proactive strategies; to harmful relationships with wiser choices and boundaries. Moving to Dwelling 3 requires the wisdom to see beyond the Dwelling 1 simplicity and the strength to choose something other than default psychological responses .

The psychological tendencies of the human mind (basic psychological drives and responses) exert a strong gravitational pull to operate from the mentality of the outer dwellings; these external pulls are often unwelcome and difficult to control.

But a spiritual force also operates in your inner landscape: your Divine Companion exerts a counteracting pull towards the spiritual perspective of the inner dwellings that ennobles your thoughts and supports better responses to difficulties.

The Outer Courtyard

You are not the only castle in the world; the outer landscape is filled many other castles, the people in your life. The walls of each castle define who you are and who another is. Although everyone is connected, each person is distinct from the others. No one else cannot exercise for you, eat a healthy diet for you, or make decisions for you; you must do these for yourself.

Your castle cannot survive without exchanges with other castles; connections with people is part of a full and meaningful life. Some castles (people) are friendly; others can be very hostile. A good castle has a buffer where you can interact with others with some protections until you know who will ultimately be friendly or hostile. A good castle will cultivate healthy relationships and influences (otherwise you would starve) and also protects against toxic relationships and influences (otherwise you can be undermined and sabotaged, even destroyed).

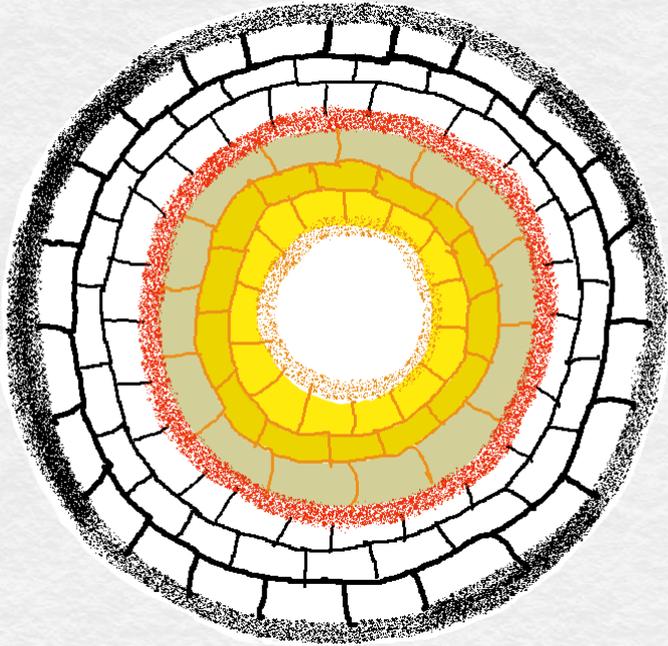
If your outer courtyard has very permeable boundaries, many influences can gain a foothold in your inner landscape: some for the better, some for the worse. Permeable boundaries help you by being more receptive to new ideas but also make you vulnerable to

Carcasonne has an outer courtyard, a semi-protected space between the inner walls and the outermost wall, where castle dwellers can mingle with outsiders to trade goods and ideas. The outer courtyard acts as the buffer that allows people part-way into castle territory without letting them into the innermost castle until they are proven to be trustworthy. A courtyard is only useful if you have the wisdom to discern who is harmful and should be kept out from who is helpful and can be safely admitted to your inner castle.

Other castles may send emissaries who take up residence in your castle; these are like the internalized voices of important people in your life. Emissaries may be very helpful or they may be irritating, sowing internal discord and refusing to be leave peacefully. A wisely used outer courtyard welcomes emissaries who have much to offer you while stopping undesired emissaries from invading your castle.

being harmed by unhealthy people who are likely to take advantage of your weak boundaries. Appropriate boundaries (neither too permeable nor too impermeable) can help regulate the flow of healthy and unhealthy influences into the courtyard.

Spiritual Mind: Inner Dwellings



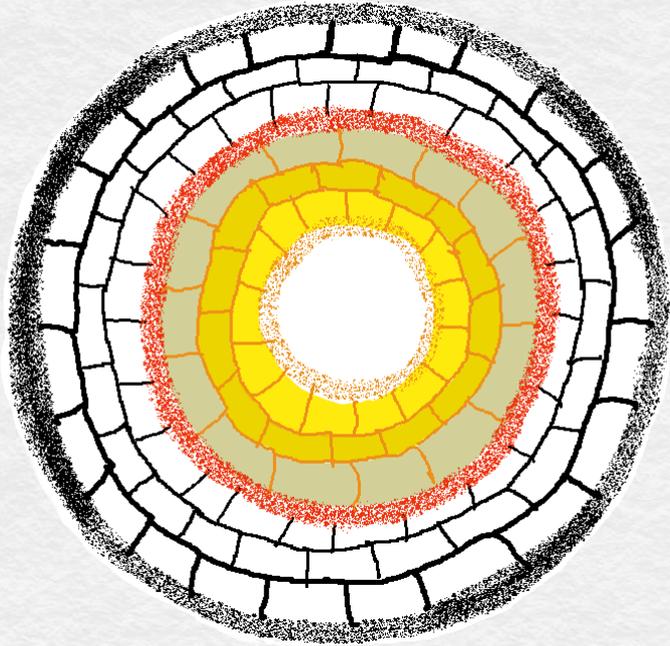
The yellow inner three layers of the castle illustration represent your spiritual mind or your spiritual capacities. Concerns with spiritual understanding, relationships and service predominate in your spiritual mind. Your spiritual capacities can range from very immature to quite developed.

The different shadings of yellow in the illustration represent different levels of spiritual maturity. The outermost faint yellow ring represents Dwelling 4 of Teresa's *Interior Castle* which is the simplest understanding of the ways of the spirit where you might become enthralled by intriguing spiritual minutiae and feel compelled to tell others what is true. The intermediate medium yellow ring represents Dwelling 5 which is home to your moderately insightful spiritual insights. The inner bright yellow ring represents Dwelling 6 which is your most accurate spiritual insights, the place where you may savor and praise the beautiful qualities of your Divine Companion, honor the sacredness of others and seek to be a good and useful servant.

Teresa of Avila's inner capacity to grasp the character of her Divine Companion blossomed as she matured. She was certain that you can always deepen your inner spiritual capacities that can be easily missed because they are more subtle than your

psychological capacities; as a result your spiritual neighborhoods may be more neglected than your psychological ones. She would encourage you to spend time in your inner dwellings (to develop your spiritual capacities) as you explore your inner landscape.

Values and Inner Movement



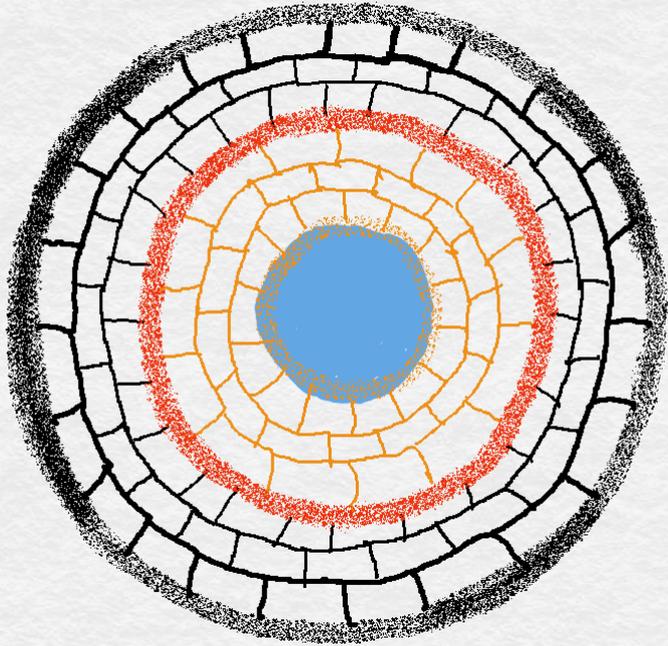
Your Decider-in-Chief's values can hinder or help you in moving from your outer psychological dwellings to your inner spiritual dwellings. Reverence, holding spiritual values above worldly values, opens doors to your inner dwellings. Egotistical values, considering yourself as superior to others, keeps you from entering the inner dwellings. Holding spiritual values, such as wanting to know the character of God, helps you enter the inner dwellings where you can receive from the infusions of love and wisdom from your Divine Companion. Even valuing spiritual concerns a little bit is enough to begin opening the doors to your inner dwellings.

Powerful experiences in your outer landscape can also open or close the doors to your inner dwellings. Trauma can drag your awareness toward your outer dwellings with intense fear and insecurity. But sometimes trauma can pull your awareness toward your inner dwellings; this is called post traumatic growth in psychology. Powerful events may initially move you to a certain inner or outer dwelling, but your Decider-in-Chief's intentional choices determine whether you remain or leave that dwelling.

You attention and awareness tend to rest on what you value the most. If you love sports (or travel, gardening, etc.), then you will spend more time thinking about these things that you love a great deal and less time thinking about other things which you

value less. You will spend most time in the dwellings that correspond to what you love most. If you love God and revere God above other worldly things, then you will naturally spend more and more time and energy in your spiritual dwellings.

The Inner Courtyard



Teresa personally experienced the presence of her Divine Companion in her inner courtyard (the center blue circle in the castle illustration). She called this sacred place in the mind *Dwelling 7*, a place where the spirit of God can mingle intimately with the human mind. In this inner place, her Divine Companion could engage quite directly with her mind. In this inner place, she felt deeply entwined with her Beloved, an exceedingly trustworthy companion. She found that her other dwellings were much improved when she returned from her embrace in the Inner Courtyard.

In the outer courtyard, you must be vigilant to protect yourself from unhealthy influences. The inner courtyard is not home to toxic lies and hatred so you don't have to defend against unhealthy influences. Entering your inner courtyard initially requires only a small deposit of trust to first receive the infusions of your Divine Companion. Having tasted the goodness of your Divine Companion, more whole-hearted and complete trust paves the way for a fuller collaboration with your Divine Companion.

The God of the grand universe can be so far beyond the grasp of the human mind as to be almost completely incomprehensible to a person. As if God did not accept this situation, God created a way to live within you like a very close friend, as if God wants to know you and be known by you. God doesn't want to be out of

your reach. Quite the opposite: God is always reaching out to you and making ways for you to feel God's character: loving and respectful, supportive and encouraging your own abilities. God is seeking a one-on-one personal collaboration via your Divine Companion who offers companionship for every step of your life.

Trust

Trust is essential for entering your inner courtyard and bonding with your Divine Companion. If you've had an abusive relationship with an important person, the you may be very reluctant to trust again. The fallout from past harmful relationships can linger in your inner landscape and poison future relationships if the damaged trust is not healed.

If you have been in seriously flawed relationships, you may naturally find it very hard to trust a new person. You may have been burned by people who, when all became clear in the end, had a low opinion of you and little concern for you. Their low opinion of you may have infected your own opinion of yourself. Your reluctance to trust protects you from such harm but also leaves you isolated and alone, without the love and connection that you desire. It can be nearly impossible to solve this safety vs. connection dilemma wholly on your own.

Thomas Keating described how sometimes the Divine Companion sometimes acted as a divine bulldozer to remove obstacles in the inner landscape of some people. Although this process doesn't feel good, it improves the inner world. But he noted that, if you have already experienced much pain in your life, then the Divine

A low level of trust from hurtful relationships in the outer world may lead you to hesitate to trust that the Divine Companion dwelling within you will be kind. You might solve this dilemma by trusting, just a small amount, that what the spiritual trailblazers found will also be true for you: if you humbly approach your Divine Companion with this dilemma, you will be rewarded with the beginnings of a wonderful relationship. You may find that even a small amount of trust will lead to a wonderful breakthrough in this dilemma: that the poisonous low opinions of yourself will begin to leave your inner landscape and you can, step by step, recover your willingness to first trust your Divine Companion, recover your respect for yourself, and then trust other people in healthy relationships. Some have found that their relationship with their Divine Companion healed many psychological wounds left by unhealthy relationships.

Companion is exceptionally tender and never uses the bulldozer. Instead, the Divine Companion gently rebuilds your inner landscape and helps evict false voices so that your trust can flow more easily. Experiencing your Divine Companion's tenderness may help resolve the impasse of trusting after being hurt.

Interior Castle 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!

A Castle over Time

A city-castle doesn't spring up in complete form all at once; it has a long history of building, additions, decay and renovation over the centuries. Construction of the walls of Carcassonne began in early Roman times and were expanded over the next thousand years. Eventually the walls fell into such disrepair that the whole castle was slated for demolition. But a committed group, who valued what the city represents, rebuilt the walls in the late 1800's; now the once derelict castle is considered a national treasure. Likewise, building and maintaining your castle is a life-long endeavor. You will likely experience times of inner growth as well as times of inner distraction or even inner decay. Even then, never lose sight of the great value of your Interior Castle; don't let your valuable treasure waste away due to your neglect or ignorance. Your Interior Castle is never a finished project; maintaining and

upgrading a healthy walled city or a healthy self requires valuing it and devoted effort. Your whole life's goal is to continually refine and develop your castle and, in the process, to cultivate your inner landscape as your ultimate masterpiece.

At various times, the walled city of Carcassonne was held by Romans, Visigoths, Muslims, a family dynasty and Christian sects (e.g., Cathars). Just as the city's rulers ranged from tolerant to tyrannical, the leadership of your Inner Castle may vary from time to time. Your inner landscape may at times be overrun by different ideas or overbearing invaders from beyond the castle walls. You would be wise to defend your Interior Castle from being overrun by inferior ideas and the baser instincts to which humans are so vulnerable; building a robust castle during times of peace and plenty prepares it to withstand difficulties during future times of siege or famine.

Like the city-castles, your interior castle is always changing. Your interior castle, like the castles of the world, likely began as a very simple structure; it wasn't terribly sophisticated but it was a great improvement over no shelter or structure at all. As you grow and your needs change, your castle requires updating to handle more complex situations.

Perhaps you haven't upgraded your castle and you have forced the original simple castle to handle situations beyond its capacities. Perhaps you have neglected your castle and it is falling into disrepair and does not serve you well. Perhaps you have great appreciation for your castle and, out of respect, you have invested much into its upkeep and improvements.

The Divine Courtship

Teresa used courtship between a woman and a suitor as an extended metaphor for how her relationship with her Divine Companion grew over her lifetime. Teresa called her Divine Companion her "Beloved" to express their passionate connection, a full-hearted embrace of one another. But their relationship didn't begin like that; it grew from a half-hearted commitment to a whole-hearted commitment as she gradually came to know and love the amazing character of her inner suitor.

Imagine a young woman who longs to commit herself to the most loving relationship possible for her. She meets many attractive suitors but struggles to discern suitors who are only fleetingly good from those suitors whose goodness has strong staying power. She tries to go slowly enough in dating so that she doesn't invest her affections in someone with only superficial goodness. But despite her best intentions, she sometimes finds herself falling for and embracing a charming suitor who eventually turns out to be shallow and selfish, not kind and loving. She finds it difficult to extract herself from this impoverished relationship because she has invested her heart; it is hard to let go of an inferior suitor after she has invested herself emotionally.

Ideally, her initial commitments would be small until she really knows the suitor well but that is not how the heart works. As she waits and yearns, sometimes her attractions that are rooted in her lesser values win out. She needs experiences, some painful, to develop a deeper insight into her own values so she can better discern which potential partners have the capacity and desire for a sustained and sustaining relationship.

The Divine Courtship

Imagine that, among all of this woman's suitors, and unbeknownst to her, one suitor is a person with incredible depth who loves her devotedly. But with her limited insight, she doesn't realize how much this person outshines all other potential partners. She doesn't yet recognize the wonderful character of this suitor and has no idea of the amazing love that awaits her if she commits to this person. And so she treats him just like any other suitor that she might date. She thinks this suitor is nice but she has no idea what an amazing and supportive partner this person would become if she opened herself to a committed relationship. She thinks lightly of him and treats him much like all the other not-so-great suitors; she doesn't seriously entertain the idea of making exclusive commitment with this amazing person. She is not ready to fully trust this suitor with her heart for fear of missing out on someone better; she is ambivalent in deciding about fully giving her heart to the suitor. She holds on to the possibility that another partner might offer her more love and happiness; she continues to keep her options open and date others while spending some time with the great suitor. She remains undecided because she doesn't really grasp the character of her various suitors.

In her undecided state, her eye is still caught by the flashiness of the less worthy suitors. Her heart vacillates between the wonderful suitor and the other possibilities. Amazingly, her ideal suitor is infinitely patient as she continues to explore her options with the lesser suitors. She may be enthusiastic for her ideal suitor one day only to be entranced by some allure of a lesser suitor the following day. She is not ready to dedicate her heart to one person, to give all her loyalty to the one person she treasures above all others.

The Divine Courtship

Then an event happens. Perhaps, based on her accumulation of experiences, wisdom gradually dawns on her and she sees the suitors she has been dating with greater clarity. Or perhaps she has a grievous loss, a sickness, a crisis, a major disillusioning and her eyes suddenly open so she can finally see the amazing character of her ideal suitor.

After this event, she makes a solid commitment to this ideal suitor who has great capacity for loving; she feels much more deeply connected with this person. She pledges herself and she considers that they are an exclusive couple. They have a commitment but it's not yet written in stone; she has moved from dating to courtship but not yet to a full marriage commitment.

Despite her quantum leap in commitment, she occasionally wavers and feels a tug of attraction for someone or something else. At these times, her memory of the wonderful love of her ideal suitor temporarily fades. She is not consistently thinking of the wonderful qualities of her ideal suitor. Through all of this, her ideal suitor's infinite patience continues; it is clear that this suitor will wait as long as necessary as she continues to invest some of her desires and dreams in other people and things. Her ideal suitor remains unflinchingly loyal to her, faithfully confident of the wonderful partnership that they could share, certain of the unique things that they could create together, certain of the amazing union that they could share.

The Divine Courtship

Then, at some point, her vacillations completely and finally end. She sees quite deeply the wonderful character of her ideal suitor; she clearly sees the amazing faithfulness of her suitor as she dallied with far less worthy dates. She is so amazed by the depth of love and wisdom of her suitor that she makes a full and complete commitment to their relationship. All other possible partners permanently fade into a far distant second place in her affections; she remains kind to the others but she no longer considers offering them the highest place in her heart. She completely pledges her love to this ideal suitor who is now her partner, no longer her suitor. They spend much more time together, just the two of them; they share great intimacies and their bond becomes incredibly strong. She has moved from a dating commitment to a marriage commitment.

She is transformed by their embraces. She sees the world differently, more as a place of adventures than a place of woe and frustration. She is more courageous in undertaking new projects that previously intimidated her. She is kinder to her friends than before but, most strikingly, she is also kind to people who have nothing to offer her; she is compassionate to people who are suffering. She has a thirst to know and understand, particularly to know the inner world of those she meets, to know the intentions and deeper meanings that lie under the outer appearances of others. It is as if her template for relating to others now follows the template of she connects with her partner.

Although she is transformed, she is rejected by some who knew her before her great commitment; perhaps they preferred her old personality. She is also rejected by some who meet her for the first time after her great commitment; yet she remains confident in her new perspective that flows from this relationship. But she is greatly appreciated by those who crave an I-Thou connection.

The Divine Courtship

Her partner is both loving and wise; her partner nurtures and supports her. As she relinquishes her insistence on having everything her way, she more fully shares decision making with her partner. She is loyal to her partner even when difficult times test her trust in the partnership. As she remains faithful during these challenges, the loving connection with her partner deepens. Through many difficulties, through consecration of her own will, through resisting the temptations of an easy life, her love and loyalty become true and sure, her commitment to her partner is now beyond question. Unbelievably, the love of her partner deepens further (it has always been deep but now she sees it and experiences it more fully); her partner becomes even more nurturing and continues to strengthen her. Her sense of gratitude is greater than it was in the beginning; her love for her partner has opened her eyes to see his character more fully; her devotion to her partner and his vision has transformed her own character.

Their relationship blossoms into a seamless cooperation. She is moving from being a solo decider to a joint decider who is attuned to her partner. Now they are a very creative and productive team who can do much more than either could alone.

Teresa's dating metaphor illustrates how initially your attention can be drawn quite strongly to the worldly aspects of life, the material and social aspects. Their pull can be so strong that you neglect life's spiritual aspects; you value worldly things the most. You need to first experience the spiritual aspects of life, especially through your relationship with your Divine

Companion, before they become valuable to you. Until you have had sufficient experiences to really grasp the wonderful nature of the Divine Companion, your affections may vacillate between worldly and spiritual values. This metaphor is about choosing very clearly what you value the most in your life and then devoting yourself to what you treasure above all other things.

Other Metaphors

In Teresa's courting metaphor, she emphasized the loving relationship which she found with her Beloved, the divine dwelling within her as a wonderful lover. The Divine Companion is an intimate partner who is faithfully with you so that you are never alone, so that you are never abandoned, so that you always have a loving and supportive presence even in circumstances when people are very mean to you. This partner is available to you in your inner dwellings, your spiritual mind, where you can get to know this partner. Other metaphors describe other facets of the Divine Companion.

Your Divine Companion can, if you are willing, be a brilliant tutor who understands much more than you but is also a great teacher who can eloquently communicate this wisdom to you (who understand much less) in a way that is perfectly suited to the limits of your understanding; a tutor whose lessons are

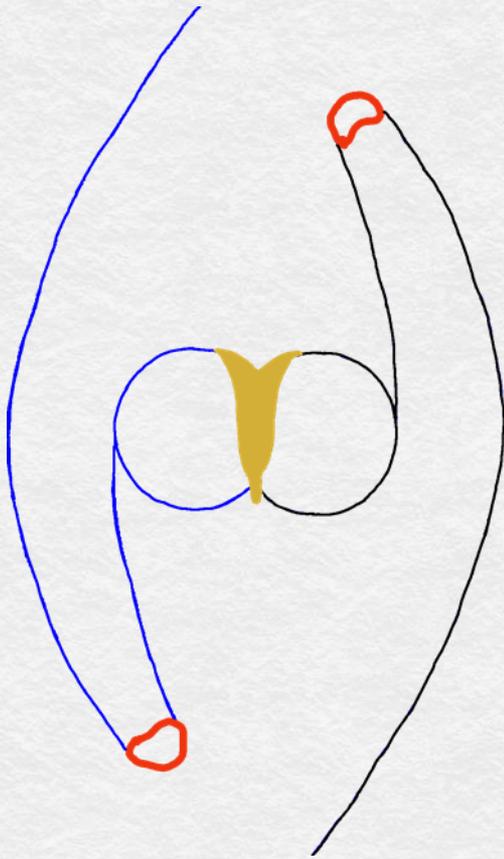
The tone embodied in each of these metaphors is that your Divine Companion never wants you to never feel alone in any way: alone without someone who values you, alone without a teacher to clarify things, alone without a guide to your rich inner world, or alone without a partner for your life projects. These metaphors express the contributions your Divine Companion brings to your

never so far above your level that you are cannot grasp what you need to learn.

Your Divine Companion can, if you are willing, be a wise guide to the spiritual resources of your inner world who leads you to the inner place where you can experience the embrace and guidance of your Divine Companion.

Your Divine Companion can, if you are willing, be a perfect partner for undertaking spiritual tasks, tasks that are far easier to complete when you have a good partner. Your Divine Companion may present you with certain spiritual projects to undertake but never expects you to do such work on your own and will always assist you when you whole-heartedly do your part; your Divine Companion will contribute a great deal to your collaborations when you put forth your best effort.

relationship: a partner who is very attuned to your needs and is capable of meeting them. All healthy relationships require contributions from each partner. Your core contribution is your desire, your decision to love and fully cooperate with your Divine Companion; your contribution activates the relationship so that your Divine Companion can contribute the divine infusions.



Continually Changing Castles

The Once and Future Castle

A castle-city was continually changing to meet the needs of the people who lived in it, changing to meet the new requirements of each era. The structure and details of each castle are like a living history of the previous occupants: the various religious or political groups who captured the castle and used it over its many years of existence. Each group of inhabitants modified the castle to suit their needs; the layout of today's castle still bears the imprint of its earlier inhabitants and reflects their ways of living and thinking. In the same way, your interior castle bears the imprint of your earlier life and retains your thoughts, feelings and responses that still reflect your younger, often less mature, understanding of life.

Each castle began as a very rudimentary structure, not as a full-blown city. A castle was improved over time if the inhabitants were skilled or it decayed if they were not. New

parts were added to meet new needs; other obsolete parts were remodeled or torn down. In the same way, your interior castle began as an extremely useful but very basic structure that may not serve all of your needs now. Over time, you will need enhance the useful parts of your interior castle and adapt the less-useful parts for better purposes. You may have neglected to remove or remodel some harmful vestiges, such as a part that harbors extreme and unrealistic anxiety, and such vestigial parts will continue to inhibit you and rob you of the joy of life.

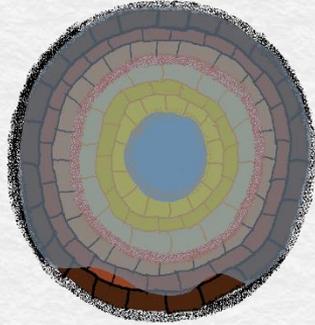
Your interior castle also has unimagined potential for a larger future, embryonic possibilities that you can just barely imagine now. You may have only the slightest idea of the wonderful expansions that your castle can make. Your interior castle of today need not be your interior castle of tomorrow.

Your various capacities hint at some of the latent possibilities for expanding your castle. You may have neglected your artistic side and forgotten that you even have such capabilities, but you can uncover your artistic talent by trying your hand at making art. Until that point, your artistic side remains just an abstract idea.

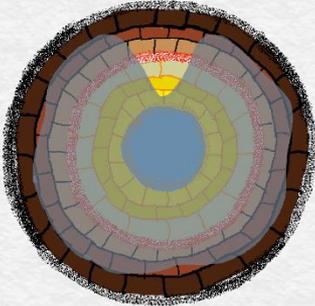
You may have neglected your spiritual side; you may not even realize that spiritual capacities are built into your interior castle until you try some practices for spiritual enrichment and opening your spiritual heart. Until that point, your spiritual aspects remain just an abstract idea.

Variety of Castle Styles

The greyed out areas of the castle represent undeveloped areas of a castle; the full color areas represent the developed areas that are valued by the mayor of the castle.



The top image represents a castle devoted to aggression that neglects other interests. The bottom image represents a castle devoted to spiritual concerns with just enough development of the other aspects of the castle to handle the basic needs of living.



Each of the castles of Europe were each unique and reflected the values of the people who occupied them, or more precisely, the values and character of the mayor of the castle.

One mayor may have valued conquest in battle and devoted much space in the castle for knights, smiths to make weapons, and stables to maintain horses for the calvary. Another mayor may have valued learning and devoted much space to a large library and supported a group of scholars. Another mayor, a patron of the arts, may have devoted much space for musicians, actors and painters. Another mayor may have loved God and devoted much space to a chapel for worship and dwellings for spiritual sages. Each castle allocated its inner space and resources to support what the mayor valued.

You, as the mayor of your interior castle, will decide how you allocate your inner space, your energy and resources, according to what you value most.

Just as the castle of a warlike mayor devoted much space to soldiering, if you are suspicious of others, you may devote much inner space to aggressive thoughts, to being prepared to wage psychological war against other people. Just as the castle of a more socially inclined mayor devoted much space to meeting places,

if you are interested in building bonds with other people, you may devote much inner space to affiliative thoughts, looking for chances to engage and cooperate with other people. Your values, what you want to grow more of, will determine which thoughts and habits predominate in your mind.

Old Castle Remnants, Old Mental Vestiges

Your inner landscape has vestiges that remain from long ago: intense fear that another person will attack you or take what you need to survive; aggressive instincts to attack such people before they prey on you; the instinct to be subservient to those higher in the pecking order; the desire to move up in the pecking order; the need to brag about your good deeds while hiding your shortcomings and failures; shame that began when you were scorned long ago and continues to linger long after that experience; anxiety that initially took root in harsh circumstances but stubbornly lives on in safer circumstances; unquenchable and addictive desire, a nearly irrepressible lust, to get ever more of the things in life that once gave you pleasure or relief from stress. Such primitive vestiges of your mind can remain very strong and very insistent; if you allow them to proliferate, they can needlessly prolong your mental pain and inhibit your growth.

Excessive and unrealistic anxiety is a very common vestige that can dramatically affect your inner world. Perhaps you may be very anxious about how things will go in a certain upcoming situation, such as giving a speech, having a difficult conversation with a partner, or getting evaluated at work. You may have been tormented by fearful thoughts as the time for the feared situation draws closer only to find that the dreaded event was not nearly as bad as you imagined it would be. This common sequence—exaggerating the severity of an issue or situation only to find that the issue or situation was not nearly as bad as you imagined—is an example of how the primitive vestige of anxiety hurts you rather than helps you. Anxiety may improve simple performance, such as running faster or hitting harder, but anxiety ultimately interferes with higher mental functions such as insight into relationships and problem solving thorny situations.

Your capacities—psychological or spiritual—are either developing and growing or stagnating and crystallizing. The vestiges of your mind have a tendency to not grow, but to crystallize; they set into stone older views and habits even though they no longer serve you well. You can counteract this innate tendency of the

mind to retain even useless ways by fostering an open mindset that is willing to fearlessly evaluate the various parts of your castle. This meta-mindset understands and compensates for the brain's tendency to staunchly retain older perspectives without revision and without much insight into their usefulness.

Coping with Mental Vestiges

Noticing your mind's primitive but still powerful vestiges is the first step in taming the outsized influence they can wield in your inner world. The actions of your mind, even glaringly unhelpful actions, can become so familiar to you that you no longer notice them, much as you might habituate to the sights and sounds of a familiar setting. Noticing the common mental habits which you take for granted allows you to begin changing them to better ways of thinking and acting.

Another step in taming mental vestiges is to understand and really trust that they can actually be changed. It can be easy to believe that mental vestiges, such as out-of-date narratives and no longer useful responses, are impossible to change. They may appear to be set in stone but even the stone walls of a castle can fall down and then the old stones can be used in new positions when the castle is rebuilt in a better way.

Before starting major castle renovations, a mayor would draw up a blueprint that envisioned the future castle. A wise mayor would consult an architect who understood castle design (flaws and good features) as well as construction methods. A simplistic blueprint would result in a less-than-satisfactory future castle.

The ideas and guidance of the master inner gardeners can help you decide what you want to change in your inner world, to imagine new and better ways for organizing your castle that support a better way of living. They help ensure that you don't overlook your wonderful spiritual parts that can be so easily missed in the psychological mind's busyness. Only when you are aware of the spiritual parts of your inner landscape can you begin exploring them. They grow stronger when you explore and use them; they nourish your psychological mind and reduce the powerful pull of vestiges that hold you captive to old psychological wounds.

An inner growth force, equally as powerful as the pull of vestiges, can counteract the innate tendency to retain primitive mental vestiges. And your Divine Companion also stands ready to assist you in improving your inner world.

Likewise, your inner renovations must begin with a clear vision of how you want to grow; sages of the inner world can help you wisely envision your future self. Without a well-considered plan based on deep values, even the best efforts at inner renovation will not produce a worthy future interior castle.

Undiscovered, Untapped Possibilities

In addition to unhelpful vestiges, your mind also holds wonderful latent possibilities, new capacities you may doubt until you have developed them. Mary Pipher earned a doctorate but considered herself as having virtually no writing talent because of an early teachers' harsh comments about her writing style. She had long wanted to write but didn't think that she had any talent for it. Many years after graduate school, she tentatively tried writing by taking a course at her local community college. She was moved to tears when her professor gave her very affirming feedback after her first submission. She went on to write books that touched many people because of how well she expresses the nuances of life in her writing. She always had an amazing capacity for writing but she never knew she had such capacity until she used it.

Others discovered a particular talent after many years of thinking that they didn't have any such abilities. If you were told that you had no talent for art or music, you may have easily absorbed others' view of yourself without much reflection. But, like Mary Pipher, such doubts don't mean that your talent or capacity doesn't exist. You may continue to believe a false view of yourself, such as you don't have a spiritual capability, unless you attempt to explore and develop that part of yourself. You won't know whether your spiritual aspects exist until you personally experience and cultivate them. And give enough time for your capacities to grow. Mary Pipher's writing still needed improvement and polishing long after her first writing assignment. Your spiritual capacities will take time to grow after your first experience.

Like a latent psychological capacity, you may seriously doubt that you have any spiritual capacities at all, especially if you have not used them for much of your life. A first step in uncovering your spiritual capacities is to thaw your dormant desire for Something More or Someone More. Do you wish to grasp the larger parts of your life beyond material existence? What happens after you allow that wish to stir? Do you feel more or less inspired?

Just as Mary Pipher discovered, even unrecognized capacities are still a part of you, even when you are unaware of them; they are waiting for you to discover and cultivate them. Discovery begins with a desire to start using that capacity and the courage to try using it. You can begin with being curious about the spiritual area of your inner landscape and see what develops as you seek to understand and cultivate that aspect of yourself.

Cultivating your Embryonic Parts

The spiritual capacities of the inner landscape are often widely overlooked in today's very secular zeitgeist. In this prevailing perspective, it's quite easy to never set foot in your inner spiritual regions. If you absorb a non-spiritual perspective of life, you are likely to overlook your own spiritual capacities and they will remain in an embryonic, barely-developed state.

Just as an embryo needs the support of the placenta to grow, your embryonic spiritual mind needs the support of your better-developed psychological mind to grow. Any of your psychological capacities can support the initial growth of your embryonic spiritual capacities. Your language capacity can support spiritual growth if you are moved by the writings of the trailblazers which opened you to the possibility that you too can personally experience a connection with the divine within you. Your music capacity can support spiritual growth if you are moved by sacred hymns that express a consecrated desire for connection with God. Your visual capacity can help

your spiritual growth if you are moved by the beauties of nature that hint at a greater unseen beauty. Your social capacity can help your spiritual growth if you are moved by kind interactions with another person which hint at the affectionate depths of a spiritual bond with your Divine Companion. Each psychological capacity can be a pathway for nurturing the growth of your embryonic spiritual mind.

You can catalyze your spiritual growth with spiritual awareness, insight and desire. Awareness is noticing how your spiritual experiences are unique, not simply another variety of psychological experience. Insight, understanding your experiences, involves appreciating and valuing your spiritual experiences and discoveries. Desire is the motivation to commit your continual efforts to developing the spiritual aspects of yourself and your budding relationship with your Divine Companion. These three elements help nourish embryonic spiritual capacities.

Teresa taught that you can grow your embryonic spiritual rooms by spending more time in your inner dwellings where you can begin to grasp the tender loving character of your Divine Companion. When circumstances eventually pull you out of an inner spiritual

dwelling, as they always will, you may find, as Teresa did, that your outermost dwellings (your psychological views and behaviors) have been delightfully changed after spending time with your Divine Companion in your inner more spiritual dwellings.

The Blossoming of your Spiritual Mind

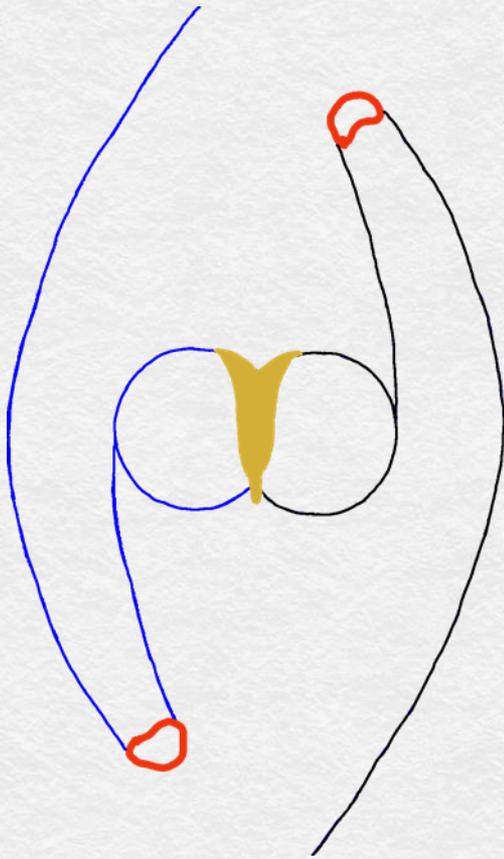
Your awareness of your spiritual capacities may fade into the background when you have too much stress from many pressing demands in your life. Yet, paradoxically, many people found that stressful times were powerful fertilizer for cultivating the spiritual areas of their inner landscape. When their psychological strengths failed them in stressful times, they made quantum leaps in their spiritual growth.

Your spiritual capacities can also grow without being in dire circumstances if you choose to place your inner focus on higher values and allocate more energy to spiritual ideals than material urges. The spiritual trailblazers found that placing value on and putting effort into cultivating the spiritual mind produced great fruit in terms of peace of mind during stressful times and more compassion for marginalized people.

Your mind has branches as well as roots, human parts as well as divine parts. Your roots are the psychological foundation that has helped you meet the material demands of life. Some roots are very helpful but other roots currently no longer serve you well; they anchor you too much to the material world and interfere with your spiritual growth.

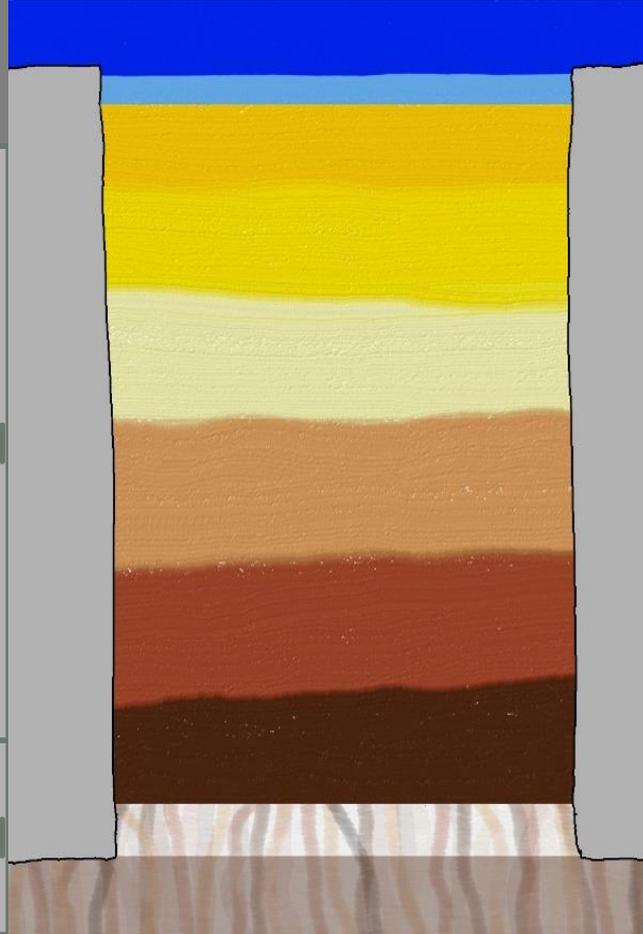
Teresa described how goals that previously felt as if they were impossible for her to accomplish became quite simple after she drew near to her Beloved in her innermost room. As her relationship with her Divine Companion blossomed, her functioning in the world also blossomed. After drawing near to her Divine Companion, she was far better able to interact lovingly with difficult people who had previously frustrated her a great deal. She became much more compassionate almost effortlessly after the embrace of her Divine Companion, as if she had received a love that greatly enhanced her own ability to give similar love. She described a quantum leap in being more loving to others after she was received and loved by her own Beloved. Even Teresa's spiritual capacities were embryonic early in her life and only barely hinted at the great spiritual blossoming that lay in her future.

Your branches represent your potential to reach upward and allow you to assimilate spiritual gifts which help the psychological parts of your inner landscape just as the leaves of a tree synthesize nutrients for all parts of the tree. The branches not only nourish the plant but also produce flowers with a fragrance that sweetens the air beyond the tree.



Interior Townhouse Metaphor

Interior Townhouse

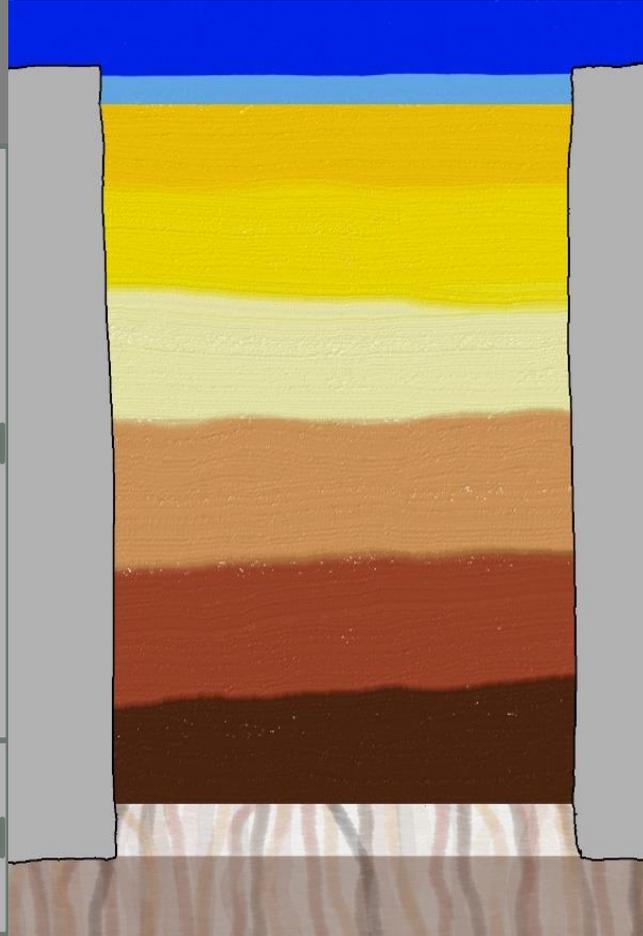


“Zooming in” on one slice of the circular castle illustration creates a rectangular view, nicknamed the *Interior Townhouse* metaphor, that accentuates the various levels of mind: some levels are more beholden to the world; some are more receptive to your Divine Companion. It also shows more details of the outer and inner courtyards.

The three brownish bands represent your psychological mind that deals with the material and social aspects of life. The darker shade of brown (the lower band) represents the less mature parts of your psychological mind which see the world and people in very concrete ways. The lighter shade of brown (the upper band) represents the more mature parts of your psychological mind that understand the world and people with more depth.

The gray bands just under the brown bands represent your outer courtyard where aspects of your outer landscape (your experiences) affect your inner landscape (your mind). The lighter gray band just below the brown bands represents your personal experiences that are unique to you: your family, partners, friends, teachers, coaches and the ideas in your immediate environment that bathe your brain. The darker gray band at the bottom represents the broader environmental factors shared by many people, such as economics, environmental catastrophes, and political inclusion/exclusion for race, religion, gender or other reasons.

Interior Townhouse



The three yellowish bands represent your spiritual mind, your capacities for perceiving and processing the spiritual aspects of life. The paler shade of yellow (the lower yellow band) represents the less mature parts of your spiritual mind that understand spirituality in more literal terms, where your spiritual understanding is very colored by your psychological understanding. The brighter shade of yellow (the upper yellow band) represents the more mature aspects of your spiritual mind that understand spirituality more deeply as result of your personal spiritual experiences, less distorted by the immature perspective of the lower bands.

The upper blue bands just above the yellow bands represent your inner courtyard where the spiritual aspects of life can nourish your inner landscape, uplifting your spiritual thoughts and feelings. The blue bands are your upper courtyard, the place where you can interact with your Divine Companion with minimal distortions from your psychological mind. The light blue band represents your personal spiritual experiences that flow from your relationship with your Divine Companion who you know as an intimate friend and connects you with the divine if you are willing. The highest blue band represents God as the Deity who exists in the great expanses of the universe, who is just as wonderful as your Divine Companion but who is usually far beyond the grasp of most people.

The Two Courtyards

You are inescapably linked with the material world and with other people; some links are personal for you and others are felt by many. In Teresa of Avila's castle metaphor, the outer courtyard is the interface between you and the world where the world's influences can move in and take up nearly permanent residence in your inner landscape. Some external influences are nearby, like roots from a tree just outside the castle (or townhouse) have come inside under the walls. The roots represent close external factors such as ideas that you acquired from your family or close friends.

Other external factors are far away, like smoke from a distant fire that comes through the castle windows and hang in the air inside. The smoke represents general prevailing external influences such as ideas commonly accepted in society; some helpful, others are toxic and many are a blend of helpful and harmful. These near and distant influences become woven into the fabric of how you see yourself and the world.

Influences from the outer landscape (outer courtyard) can be harmful or helpful. Harmful influences may come from people with ulterior motives or limited understanding about life and who you are. But spiritual influences (inner courtyard) are only helpful.

Just as you are inextricably connected with the material and social aspects of life, you are also intimately connected with spiritual aspects of life. Your inner courtyard, the counterpart to the outer courtyard, is where spiritual influences can affect you. Some spiritual aspects are distant and quite hard to grasp, such as the nature of Deity; some aspects are closer and easier to grasp, such as a very personal and individual relationship with your Divine Companion. Through the inner courtyard, spiritual influences can be woven into your inner landscape, into your very character (just as social influences are woven into your mind through the outer courtyard).

It's as if God was not content with having only a distant connection with you so God endowed you with an inner courtyard as a way that you and God can draw very close in your own personal experience, so that you can grasp God's sublime character for yourself and, if you want, to form an intimate relationship with God via your Divine Companion.

Over and over again, spiritual trailblazers describe their Divine Companion as being exceptionally tender and supportive, not as being judgmental and aloof. They felt that that the Divine Companion wants to build you up, not tear you down.

Your Choice in the Courtyards

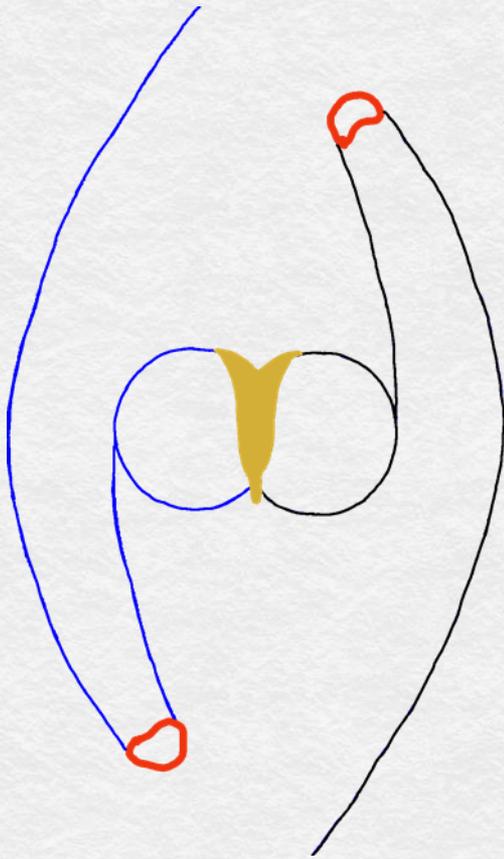
The two courtyards of your interior castle represent how influences outside of you can become part of you: influences from the material world can enter you through the outer courtyard and spiritual influences through can enter you from the inner courtyard.

You cannot escape the material aspects of life; they will almost relentlessly enter your outer courtyard in the form of your early experiences in life or the pressing demands of your current situation. The impact of relationships, especially harmful ones, can very easily enter your lower courtyard and remain as squatters who overstay their welcome without your consent for many years invading your psychological mind.

The spiritual aspects of life, in contrast, will not enter your mind against your wishes. Helpful spiritual influences are always present and available in your inner courtyard but they do not force their way in like material influences may. These spiritual infusions await your informed consent before entering and enriching your mind. But you must make a conscious choice to include these spiritual influences before they actually become available in your inner life. Your choice may vary from a slight interest in spirituality to a whole-hearted desire for the spiritual nourishment that lies in reserve for you in your inner courtyard. This choice – to open or close the door to your inner courtyard – is the essential choice that determines the influx of spiritual influences.

Before participating in a research project, you and the researcher don't know exactly what the experimental treatment will do for you or do to you. Before you decide whether to receive the experimental treatment, the researcher must tell you all about the treatment, the unwanted side-effects and outcomes as well as the possible good outcomes. This information gives you a complete picture which allows you to make an informed consent before receiving the experimental treatment.

Before beginning your relationship with your Divine Companion, you don't fully know your Divine Companion's character and how it will impact you. Before deciding to cultivate a relationship, your Divine Companion will show you as much of the Divine Companion's character as you can grasp. Your personal grasp of your Divine Companion's character makes you fully informed before you consent to further deepening your relationship; your Divine Companion never forces you to make a blind and uninformed choice.



Inner Clan: IFS Metaphor

Internal Family Systems

Each school of psychotherapy is based on a map of the inner landscape that explains the processes that operate in a person's mind. Freud famously described your inner landscape as having a superego, an ego and an id; he also described various often unconscious processes that happen in your inner landscape, such as repression of unacceptable urges.

Internal Family Systems, as well as other schools of psychotherapy such as Ego Psychology, describe your inner landscape as being inhabited by an Inner Clan or an Inner Tribe. Your inner clan is a collection of personas, several very distinct sub-personalities within you. This metaphor emphasizes how your inner landscape is not occupied by a single identity; you are not a single homogenous "you."

Each of your personas has a distinctive narrative: a unique perspective on life and relationships, a particular emotional

tone, concern with certain issues, and typical ways of responding to situations. Each persona is analogous to a dwelling in the *Interior Castle*. Like each dwelling, each persona has its own unique characteristics just as each of your friends has a unique personality; a persona can be immature (closer to the outside ring of dwellings of the Interior Castle) or more mature (closer to the inner ring).

Integrating the Interior Castle metaphor with the Interior Clan metaphor, you can imagine that each dwelling is occupied by a persona with a distinctive perspective through which they see you (good or shameful) and the world (dangerous or wonderful). Often the personas build thick walls to their dwellings and are isolated on in conflict with neighboring personas. Your inner landscape functions better when dwellings/personas are more connected and cooperating with each other.

Each map of your inner landscape—whether psychological or spiritual—may be helpful to you in understanding yourself; it's not necessary to choose one map and reject another map. Physics uses two models to best understand light: the wave model and the photon particle model. Using both models helps explain more

behavior of light than either model alone. In an analogous way, you may find that combining two inner maps, the Interior Castle and Inner Clan, helps you understand yourself better. The value of a map is whether it enhances your understanding of your inner processes and helps you adapt and grow.

IFS Metaphor: The Inner Clan

Richard Schwartz, the psychologist who developed Internal Family Systems (IFS), suggests that, from a practical perspective, it's useful to see your inner landscape as containing different **parts or sub-personalities**. You may be better able to make changes by working with these person-like parts rather than impersonal characteristics, such as your rational side or your artistic side. IFS sees all parts as trying hard to help you navigate life and minimize psychological pain. Some parts, called managers, "solve" problems with rigid strategies that often have unintended consequences. Other parts, called firefighters, "solve" the problem of overwhelming painful feelings in impulsive and inappropriate strategies. Another kind of part, called exiles, contain and quarantine your traumatic or toxic experiences believing that they must be avoided at all costs, that you would be completely devastated if you were aware of these experiences.

The word "ego" is commonly used to refer to the stance of holding onto power without sharing and acting in rigid, inflexible ways. Personas often hold these self-centered and immature stances. For these reasons, some people consider the ego to be a bad thing. But IFS considers the rigidity of personas as vestiges of well-intentioned but immature ways of coping with

A very common, but very mistaken, view of your inner landscape is that you have just one inner dwelling, just one inner persona. This view may be reinforced by the way your most dominant persona floods your inner airways with an unrelenting monologue. This persona desperately clings to its King/Queen-of-the-Landscape position believing that its coping strategy is the only way to save you from danger and get what you want; this persona has no idea that its views are quite limited and its coping style is often inappropriate for a situation.

A distorted one-persona or one-dwelling map of yourself doesn't reveal the richness of your inner landscape and deprives you of the many great resources that lie within you; this limited map will keep you stuck where you are and won't help you navigate new challenges that you encounter.

overwhelming situations. The goal of IFS is to respect these personas for their desire to help solve the problems you face, draw them into dialogue, reassure them that you have better ways of solving the situation and gratefully relieve them of their current responsibilities so that they can assume new, more appropriate roles in your inner landscape.

A Tale of Two Personas

Imagine that, at a certain moment, you are experiencing your current situation from the perspective of an immature persona in one of the first Dwellings, the outermost brown ring in the Interior Castle quite influenced by the outer courtyard. This persona has a very limited perspective and is readily swayed by your worldly experiences and hardly receptive to your spiritual resources. Perhaps this persona is perpetually upset and aggrieved by the injustices you have experienced in the outer landscape and thus feels entitled to lash out at others in anger. This persona has virtually no sense of other ways of seeing your situation or other ways of responding.

This outer-dwelling persona sees people through a very primitive lens: will they help me or hurt me? This lens, formed during long ago traumatic experiences, distorts the people who you meet now. When this persona is activated and dominant in inner decision-making, you may have very little graciousness and empathy for others.

A major concept in the Inner Clan metaphor is that, at any one moment, a different persona can dominate your inner landscape and determine how you see life and respond to situations. You have the ability to intentionally change which persona prevails in

Now imagine that, at a different moment, you experience the same situation from the perspective of a more mature persona in one of the third Dwellings, the lightest brown ring in the Interior Castle. This persona has a broader narrative that includes both your difficult experiences but also has some inkling that life offers better possibilities. This persona balances the injustices you have experienced in the outer landscape with your desire to have healthy and loving relationships. This persona's narrative is more influenced by hope for a better life than by worries about being protected.

The more center-dwelling persona sees people through a broader and less distorted lens: what is their life story? how might we connect and enjoy each other? This lens, much less distorted by earlier experiences, sees people more clearly. When this persona is activated and leading the decisions you make in your inner landscape, you can be more attuned to others and respond to them with graciousness and empathy.

your inner landscape. By cultivating a more inclusive perspective, you can move your prevailing awareness from the outer ring of dwellings (strongly influenced by the world) toward the inner rings (increasingly influenced by your Decider-in-Chief).

IFS: the Core Self

As a therapist working with people to integrate their various sub-personalities, Schwartz observed that most clients, including very overwhelmed people, have an innate source of wisdom and compassion within themselves. He calls this healing source within a person **the (Core) Self** which has amazing but seldom utilized capabilities unless you cultivate the presence of your Core Self. His clients often experienced a quantum leap in resolving psychological problems when they accessed what he calls the Self state, an openness to someone larger than you, the Core Self, in your inner landscape.

He found that it takes intention and effort to be receptive to your Core Self because your parts (personas) seldom trust that anyone else, even your Core Self, is capable of solving your problems; so parts (personas) often ignore the Core Self and try to manage life using their own usually immature plans. In

the common default state, one or two personas assume leadership of your inner landscape and cling to this power because they fear your problems won't be adequately handled by your Core Self; this internal state usually perpetuates problems. Like his clients, you can grow and heal in amazing ways when you move from this default state of affairs and allow your Core Self to lead in your inner landscape.

Schwartz sees the Core Self as wiser than either the client or the therapist. The IFS approach relieves you, a therapist or any external authority, of the need to have all the answers to your issues; your role is to simply facilitate your openness to your own Core Self or Inner Guide. Activating your Core Self and including your Core Self in your inner dialogue often reveals solutions and possibilities that you could not even imagine before you involved your Core Self.

The qualities of the Core Self described by Schwartz are similar to the qualities of the Divine Companion described by spiritual trailblazers. He describes the Core Self as significantly more capable of healing than you are when working solely on your own resources; spiritual trailblazers describe how what was once

impossible on their own was easy when they invited the Divine Companion to share their inner lives. The Core Self calms and brings clarity; the Divine Companion brings a poise beyond the understanding of the psychological mind alone and brings a clearer understanding of yourself, others and life.

IFS: inner dialogue is essential

A core concept in IFS psychotherapy is encouraging a more welcoming and deeper dialogue between your parts or personas; the default state of many personas is to engage mainly in monologue, to be very poor listeners to other personas. The lack of listening is based in a deep distrust of others: each persona believes that it is the only one in the entire inner landscape who can handle the situations you face. Each persona tends to have a very high regard for itself and a low regard, or even disregard, for other personas; so a persona has no reason or desire to talk with others. A dominant persona, such as your inner critic, can perpetuate much internal friction. Other personas, intimidated by the domineering persona, may have barely spoken in decades. Without intentional effort to include all parts, your personas can stagnate in this unhelpful state of affairs for a long time.

Such an impasse in your inner world can be broken by cultivating trust, especially trusting more in the kindness and wisdom of your Core Self; trust becomes the foundation for better inner dialogue. The first step in the IFS healing process is not problem solving but cultivating an inner atmosphere that facilitates a deeper dialogue which includes all of your personas and your Core Self; the purpose of the dialogue is to discover and really get to know all parts of yourself. Curiosity, the desire to explore, can motivate you to know all of your parts in depth and appreciate parts that you previously feared. Your Core Self plays a central role because it is uniquely capable of fostering a better inner dialogue; without the broader and wiser perspective of your Core Self, your inner dialogue can stagnate and your inner relationships between personas can crystallize for the rest of your life.

A concrete first step in cultivating an inner atmosphere of trust is to sympathetically listen to personas so that they 1) feel heard; 2) believe that you understand their concerns; 3) and trust that you will take care of their concerns. The first step is not to get them to cede inner leadership to the Core Self; you must first join with the personas by sharing their concerns and

goals. Only later will you decide what is the best way to reach those goals. Letting go of your primary *modus operandi* is hard unless you can realistically trust that a new way will be adopted that is even better at achieving the goals of the current M.O. The first steps of IFS are designed to create enough inner trust so that the dominant persona is willing to relinquish control.

IFS Goal: Your Core Self leads your inner world

Richard Schwartz's clients addressed their seemingly intractable issues by opening their inner dialogue to include more parts, especially the Core Self. When his clients got to know a persona in detail, the persona felt safe enough to cede its dominant role creating space for the Core Self to participate in the inner conversation. When personas ceded leadership to the Core Self, clients experienced great relief for their anxieties and other psychological pain. When the Core Self was invited to address a stubborn issue, solutions that previously seemed unreachable often came easily.

Self-Leadership is when your personas willingly allow your Core Self to assume leadership in your inner world; self-leadership is recognition by your Decider-in-Chief that the Core Self is by far the best inner leader and a whole-heartedly commitment to cementing the Core Self as the central leader of the inner landscape.

The first step in cultivating an inner atmosphere of trust is to sympathetically listen to your personas and appreciate their efforts. A second step is for a mature Decider-in-Chief to graciously take responsibility for the personas' concerns and assume responsibility for taking care of them.

Some psychologists and some spiritual trailblazers suggest that you can find a great source of healing within your inner landscape. The Core Self described by Richard Schwartz is quite similar to the Divine Companion described by Teresa of Avila. The first step in accessing this precious inner resource is understanding that it lives in your inner landscape. Both Richard Schwartz and Teresa recommend cultivating your inner landscape so that it is conducive to your Core Self (Schwartz) or your Divine Companion (Teresa). A spirit of trust and reverence help cultivate an accommodating soil.

According to the IFS model, you have two options for living your life: either as a persona-led life or a Self-led life. The first choice is often intensely appealing but often full of unwanted consequences. The second choice is more subtle and requires deep attention to notice that a more capable presence lives within you who is more capable and empathic.

A third step in cultivating trust is recognizing the higher wisdom of your Core Self and gratefully following the direction of your Core Self. Each step is like a stepping stone from small deposits of trust to making a final committed leap of fully trusting the kindness and wisdom of your Core Self.

IFS and *Interior Castle*: Common Ground

Richard Schwartz, an atheist, and Teresa of Avila, a devout nun, independently arrived at metaphors for the inner landscape that share very similar core concepts.

Both describe you as having a rich and varied inner life: IFS uses the word *part* to describe your people-like personas; Teresa uses the word *dwelling* to describe your varied ways of seeing and approaching life. Each persona or dwelling can be more or less mature and has shallow or deep insight.

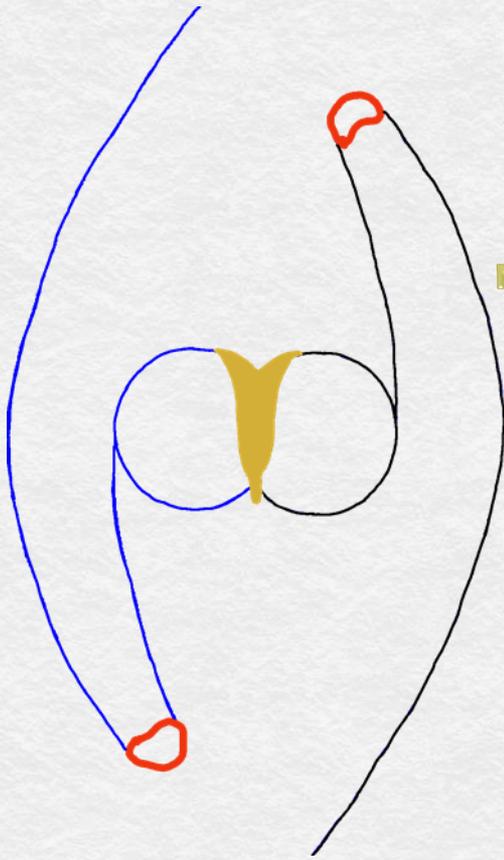
Both also describe an amazing inner presence who can heal your wounds and also guide you to a more meaningful life. Both describe this presence personally, not as an impersonal part. IFS sees this presence, your (Core) Self, from a secular perspective; Teresa sees the presence, your Divine Companion, from a spiritual perspective. Your relationship with this presence can range from complete ignorance (although even

Sometimes an idea may seem far-fetched when you first hear it. For example, continental drift was considered far-fetched when Alfred Wegener first proposed it in 1912. But as many diverse lines of evidence coalesced, the idea became clearly the best explanation for many things. Similarly, the convergence among

then this inner presence remains available for you) to a very productive collaboration. Both Richard and Teresa had personal experiences that convinced them that life is much richer when you develop a meaningful relationship with this presence.

The inner atmosphere which you foster determines what kind of relationship you will have with this inner presence. Trust helps to cultivate this relationship; insistence on your own autonomy undermines this relationship. You, as the Decider-in-Chief of your inner landscape, can respectfully seek and welcome the contributions of your Divine Companion or you can ignore and reject them. Both Richard and Teresa would say that the most important thing you can do in life is to bring your Core Self or Divine Companion into all the parts or dwellings of your inner landscape.

diverse metaphors for the inner landscape provide support for the validity of commonalities of the metaphors. Seen from this combined perspective, the idea of a Divine Companion doesn't seem far-fetched at all. Rather, it unifies so many approaches that it's hard to imagine why this idea isn't more widely valued.



The Epic Journey: Jung's Metaphor

Jung: Your core myth

Carl Jung was preoccupied with understanding human nature as deeply as he could. He was trained as a psychiatrist by Freud but Jung wasn't satisfied with the Freudian model of human nature. So Jung left and, in his search for a better model, explored the literature of many cultures. He considered their great myths and stories as the royal road to understanding what happens in the minds of those he knew best: himself and his patients in therapy. These myths and stories expressed the wisdom of the great thinkers who had attempted their own personal epic journeys and then eloquently described their experiences. These stories express a view of life seen only by a few in a way that many people can understand the wisdom gleaned from their experiences.

Just as each culture develops myths that express their best understanding of life, you also develop a core myth that includes an inner map, narrative and travel guide for understanding life. The map shows the layout of your parts; if your map is good and accurate, it will show the full breadth of yourself and others without major exclusions or distortions. The narrative explains how you, others, and the world operate; if your narrative is good and useful, it will help you understand your connection with others. The guide helps you make major decisions; if your guide is a good one, it will illuminate good values and help you navigate life's challenges. A wise core myth – map, narrative and guide – is the foundation for creating a meaningful life.

A weak myth gives a shallow explanation of your life in very literal terms; it cannot explain many things that happen in your life. A primitive map shows only some of your inner territory; it cannot open your eyes to the more subtle parts of your inner world. A faulty guide is based on trivial values; it is nearly useless in making good decisions. With a weak core myth, you can easily be entranced by the literal aspects of life and drift into a very trivial life, easily overwhelmed by the problems you encounter.

A strong myth sees life clearly and deeply and integrates much information; it helps you connect the dots that don't fit without the narrative. A good myth illuminates that values that were murky before; it wisely guides you when you have to make decisions. A good myth prepares you to cope with the difficulties that life entails and to seize the opportunities that life presents. Each person must develop his or her own myth; a second-hand myth may help develop yours, but it will never be good enough.

Two aspects to life, to you

Another common theme of the great stories is that life has two dimensions which Jung called the literal and the mythic dimensions. The literal dimension of life is based in concrete facts and is concerned with the readily observed material aspects of living. The mythic dimension of life is based in values, such as truth and goodness; it is concerned with the deeper meaning of life. The great stories help you see the mythic dimension of life which might be otherwise missed.

Each person has two inner facets that correspond to the two dimensions of the outer life that swirls around you. Jung called the two complementary facets of your inner landscape by various names that highlight their distinct nature, such as the underworld and heaven; or Person and God. Jung saw the main task of life as harmonizing these very different but complementary parts of yourself.

A literal story of your life is a simplistic listing of where you grew up; of your family and friends; of schools and jobs. It lacks any sense of your personality, the characteristics that uniquely identify you as different from other people. In contrast, a mythic story of your life includes those literal details but goes further,

You can see life through one of two lenses: literal or mythic. The literal lens sees life at the level of facts, the level of who-did-what; the mythic lens sees life from the mythic level, the level of metaphor and depth, the level which taps into the larger meaning of life. A very literal understanding of great stories – or of your own life – can completely miss the great truths at the heart of the story. Combining a literal understanding with a mythic understanding reveals the deeper meaning of these stories – just as a mythic understanding of your own life will help you see yourself more clearly and create a more meaningful life.

The literal dimension of life is not a false thing to be despised and attacked; the literal level is simply an incomplete view that doesn't include the mythic aspects of life which are essential for making your Epic Journey.

into more depth: Was your family generally loving and affectionate or more distant, even traumatic? Did you feel capable of learning and mastery at school and jobs or feel unable to master new skills? How did you respond to difficulties and hardships? What goals sparked you to continue working on a challenging goal?

Jung: The Epic Journey

Jung saw that the great myths shared a common theme: that life offers you an opportunity to embark on an Epic Journey (called the Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell), a life that includes the mythic facets of life concerned with larger meaning rather than the trivial journey of just ensuring that you have enough food in your belly, some pleasure and enough protection from life's harshness.

The core question (quest) of your life is: which path will you take: the seemingly easier trivial journey with apparently clearer answers or the more difficult epic journey with an unknown destination? Great literature and myths encourage you to choose the epic journey; to let your deeper facets occupy center stage in your mind; to winnow through your beliefs, keeping what's valuable and discarding what's harmful or useless. Taking the epic journey will change the very fabric of your mind.

The epic journey happens in several stages as you grow. The first stage is often a time of confusion when you can't clearly tell the difference between what is truth and what is a fallacy. The second stage is often a time of discerning: deciding what to keep

Great stories encourage you to let the epic journey pull you out of your trivial journey, out of your ego, out 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 curiosity or courage to embark on the journey. If you are one of the few who embark on the epic journey, you would be wise to listen to the accumulated wisdom of those who undertook their own epic journeys; the stories of their journeys will be invaluable on your own journey.

The epic journey involves growth: continually revising and improving your core myth; the trivial journey is stagnation content with crystallized small myths that never grow. Without the epic journey, your core myth remains stunted. For Jung, the purpose of life is to recast the myth you developed early in life as a child by evolving an ever-better map, narrative and guide to create a deeply meaningful life.

and what to discard; of separating the wheat from the chaff in your narrative. The third stage often involves charting a new life course based on an enlarged and more accurate view of yourself and choosing what is most personally meaningful to you.

Life's Invitation

The epic journey begins with a call, an invitation to amazing adventures. The epic journey is about being fully alive and not settling for a smaller version of yourself, not settling for your smaller story. This invitation leaves a question hanging in the air, a question that remains there throughout your life: Are you brave enough to take journey and revise your narrative? What do you hold as the deep purpose of your life? The meaning of your life hangs on how you answer the questions. The epic journey intimidates many people and they won't take it. The hero or heroine stands out from this group because he or she is willing to undertake the hard work of the journey; their example may inspire others to take their own journey. A culture or an epoch loses much when no one undertakes the epic journey and, in the process, that wisdom is no longer alive for that generation, the valuable deep myths that clarify life are no longer fresh and relevant, and the paths that integrate a person and harmonize groups of people are overgrown.

The epic journey is not for a select few; anyone can embark on their own epic journey although few seem inclined to accept the invitation. But the journey will require curiosity to look deeply at things; bravery to accept whatever you find even if it doesn't

The call to the epic journey may become louder when you are exiled from your former life, unmoored and adrift from the familiar and secure trappings of the life that you built on material values only. You might then be more willing to let go of attachments that no longer serve you; with wisdom, you might choose to form better and deeper attachments. The call to the epic journey may also be more compelling when society is in flux, when the old models aren't working anymore; old ways may actually make things worse instead of better. In hard times, either for an individual person or society as a whole, a person may be more open to the epic journey.

Your higher self invites you to the epic journey with a question: What will you make of your one wild and precious life? You can refuse the question and remain unchanged by the deeper streams of life. Or you can sit with that question until it comes alive and speaks loudly enough to you that you embark on the adventure of seeking something more.

mesh with your prior beliefs; the persistence to stay the course when the path is hard or unclear. These traits require that you really value the pursuit of the journey more than the material conveniences and pleasures of life.

The Divine Comedy

Jung saw Dante's *Divine Comedy* as a prime example of a story containing wisdom about living your best life. Dante depicted the world as having two aspects: the material and the spiritual (cosmos). Dante's stories taught that you contain these two aspects within you: a purely material/psychological self and a higher spiritual self. Dante's story is about a pilgrimage of the soul, an epic journey, in which you gradually harmonize your two aspects over a lifetime. The pilgrimage of the soul involves a search for a holy grail, a cup that is far more than a mere cup but rather a perspective of such great value that is worth all of your time and energy to seek it. Jung saw the highest purpose of your life as "the rebirth of God in [your] soul" and perhaps, if necessary, the death of any false gods that you may have come to honor along the way.

The great stories show the arc of the epic journey. As the epic journey begins, your psychological and spiritual aspects are

just getting to know each other (the courtship phase). If you nurture this budding courtship, then your two aspects may become more intimately entwined (the wedding). Over time, your two aspects develop a richer and more complete integration (the marriage). Ultimately, your psychological and spiritual aspects may create something that neither could create alone (children of the marriage). The co-creations of your integrated human and divine aspects are the highest fruit of your epic journey.

Dante describes three dispositions towards life: *inferno* (a person living only from their material aspect), *purgatorio* (a person having a dalliance their spiritual aspect) and *paradisio* (a person whose material aspect happily cooperates with their spiritual aspect). Jung wrote about psychological types, your personal disposition to life, that influence whether you embrace to own epic journey, your own pilgrimage of the soul.

The epic journey requires being able discern between truth and error. Discernment is represented by the twin goddesses, Mnemosyne, goddess of remembering the truth and Lemosyne, goddess of forgetting the errors you once believed. Sometimes

you must "unremember" or unlearn simplistic ways you previously adopted. Clinging to primitive understandings hinders moving forward. Leaving errors behind opens the possibility of embracing the enlarged truth that you discover during the epic journey.

Collective Unconscious

From Jung's explorations, he concluded that you have an innate endowment, the Collective Unconscious, that has more insight and wisdom than you could have acquired on your own. The word *collective* indicates that its wisdom resonates with the collective wisdom of a culture as told in myths and great stories. The word *unconscious* indicates that, although it is part of your inner world, it is usually just beyond your psychological awareness.

The Collective Unconscious is like a repository of the world's deep wisdom accumulated over the ages but it is accessible inside you. Your Collective Unconscious contains the same wisdom as the great stories of the world. You must intentionally seek out the valuable teachings of the inner Collective Unconscious; this great endowment can be easily be

The epic journey is an inner journey of a harmonizing your material and spiritual aspects, but you will often encounter a wise person in the outer landscape who will help you with the obstacles you encounter; Beatrice and Bernard of Clairvaux are spiritual guides in *The Divine Comedy*. The wise person can't do your work for you but can help you see yourself and the situation more clearly, in more depth. When you encounter a wise guide, you must dialogue

lost to awareness by an individual or a generation. It cannot be captured but needs to be continually rediscovered so that it is fresh and vibrant, not old and stale. The epic journey is the story of a person who rescues this valuable wisdom from obscurity. The hero or heroine in the epic journey is an individual who retrieves the deep wisdom about life so that others can more easily access it; the hero or heroine makes the old truth alive and vibrant again for the current times so it can nourish many others.

The Collective Unconscious contains wisdom and understanding far beyond your mind. In this way, the Collective Unconscious is similar to Teresa's Divine Companion who has qualities, such as kindness and insight, that are far beyond your personal capacities.

and allow that dialogue to change you by absorbing the wisdom of the guide. You must be alert for such guides who come in many disguises. New life directions can then be charted with the infusion of wisdom, your capacity for courage and compassion can grow. If you are unwilling to listen and be transformed by a dialogue with a guide, it remains just an ordinary conversation. The spiritual trailblazers are examples of such guides.

Archetypes

Jung taught that you have multiple aspects within you which he called archetypes. The main archetypes are the anima/animus, the self, the shadow, and the persona. Additional archetypes include the wise old man, the child, the mother, and the maiden. Archetypes are similar in many ways to the personas in IFS theory or to the various dwellings in *The Interior Castle*.

Students of Jung have made several lists of the more common archetypes with descriptive names: the Innocent, the Orphan, the Regular Guy or Gal, the Hero, the Caregiver, the Explorer, the Rebel, the Lover, the Creator, the Jester, the Sage, the Magician and the Ruler.

As their names suggest, each archetype has its own distinctive and often conflicting way of understanding what happens in your life and how you should respond to certain people and situations. Often the beliefs and perspectives – the myth – of

one archetype, such as the Caregiver or the Rebel, becomes your core myth and the myths of other archetypes are neglected. The myth of any one archetype is too small and limited to guide you through everything you will encounter in life; you need to integrate the contributions from each archetype to create the most expansive core myth, or core narrative, to make the most of your one wild and precious life, to respond wisely to your personal invitation for the epic journey. Adding the wisdom of the Collective Unconscious to the ideas of your archetypes greatly improves your core myth.

A myth is good because it sees clearly and widely; it integrates much information; it helps you make connections; it clarifies relationships that were murky before; it suggests nobler goals for your life and wisely guides you when you must make decisions. A myth is good because it prepares you to cope with the difficulties that life brings and it prepares you to make the most of the opportunities that life presents.

Jung was apparently reluctant to develop a systematized list of archetypes; he was more inclined to explore and see what emerged for each individual. Much more important than identifying your dominant archetypes is being able to encourage dialogue between

that archetype and your Collective Unconscious (or your Beloved in Teresa's words). Understanding your particular archetype is helpful but becoming too enamored with it may divert your energies from the other tasks of your epic journey.

Amazing Gift

Jung's ideas suggest that your life is a precious gift given to you, a gift that can become many things depending on how you use it. This gift is an opportunity to create a rich and meaningful life depending on your choices to accept the gift and make the most of it. By your choices, you determine the how meaningful your life becomes. Steadily, choice by choice, you will move through life's journey either towards an epic destination or a trivial destination.

This gift – your life – comes with a vehicle, your inner landscape, that has many features. Initially, you can only understand and use a few basic features of the vehicle; the more advanced features are locked until you have mastered the basic features. Your vehicle's advanced features remain locked if you use the basic features to travel only the trivial path through life. Life without the advanced capabilities of

your vehicle is likely to be a very rough ride at times.

Your vehicle didn't come with an instruction manual; you need to explore the vehicle to learn about it. You need to create your own personal instruction manual by become increasingly aware of the details of your inner landscape. Your choice to explore your inner landscape is essential to making the epic journey. As you explore your vehicle, you will learn more about its advanced capabilities which are necessary on the epic path. The terrain of the epic journey is very challenging but the ride can be pleasant when you have accessed the more advanced features of your vehicle.

If the precious gift of your life is to be as wonderful as possible, you must actively participate by mastering all the features of your vehicle by learning and making wise choices.

Jung implies that most people miss the amazing features of being a person and having a vehicle for living life. They seem content with using the vehicle's elementary features; they don't give much attention and effort to studying and cultivating the advanced features of their gift, their inner landscape. They may

be almost blind to the amazing features and capabilities of their inner landscape. The role of the hero/heroine is to wake people from such sleep and blindness so that they can enjoy the exhilarating ride of living their lives in their vehicle with all the features enabled so they can make their own unique epic journey.

Jung and Teresa: Commonalities

Both Jung and Teresa described your inner world as having two main facets. One facet is concerned with material or social aspects of the outer world and the human or psychological aspects of the inner world. The other facet is concerned with spirituality, deeper meanings beyond the purely human sphere. Both Jung and Teresa placed a much higher value on this second facet of life. Psychological or spiritual growth begins with simply knowing that you have both of these facets within you. Nourishing all your facets will enrich you; neglecting the spiritual facets will impoverish you.

Each facet has its own unique language and views. Integrating these two facets together brings the resources of the spiritual facet to assist the psychological facet. Inner dialogue, rooted

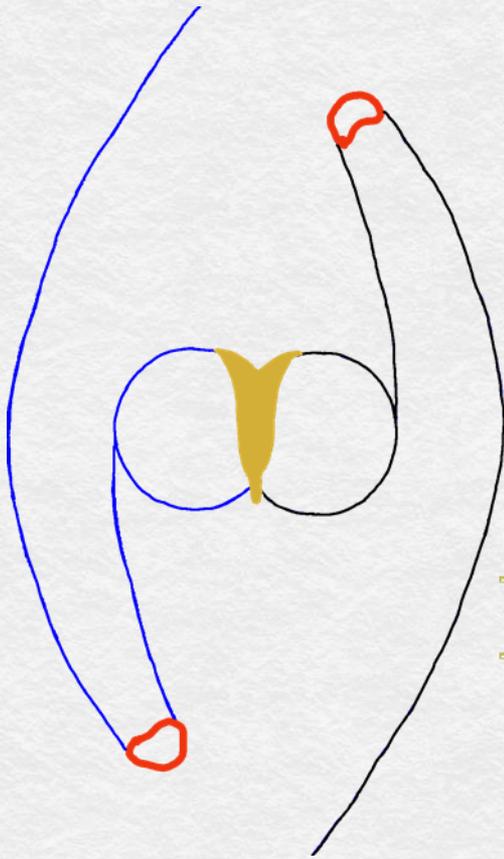
in an appreciation of both facets, is a powerful way to harmonize your inner landscape. You can choose to welcome or exclude the Collective Unconscious (your Divine Companion) in this inner dialogue. Depending on what you value and love, your dialogue with your Divine Companion can be superficial or deep, trusting or suspicious, collaborative or withholding.

Your life as a person is a gift with an embedded invitation to take the epic journey. Your response to this invitation is made by your accumulated choices that determine whether you take the trivial path or the epic path through life. Those who take the epic path are better able to encourage and assist those who don't know about their own capabilities.

Like Teresa, Jung was taken with a house as a metaphor for a person. He actually built a house on the shores of Lake Zurich with different areas that represented different parts of his psyche. A large open area (the material room) was dedicated to the material operations of life: chopping wood, feeding the stove, pumping water, and "[living] in modest harmony with Nature." An adjacent courtyard (loggia) was the area for socializing with

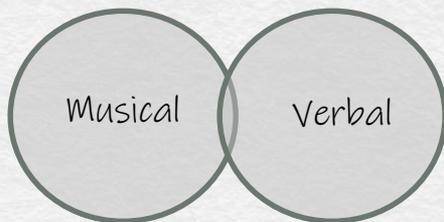
other people; these two areas are like Teresa's outer dwellings. A separate tower (the spiritual tower) was where he left behind his material concerns and did his deeper work; this area is like Teresa's inner dwellings. A central structure connect these three areas is like the core that integrates all parts of the psyche. Jung built his house over many decades just as you build your inner landscape over a lifetime.





Different Inner Capacities: Psychology Metaphor

Inner Capacities with Unique Languages



You have many different capacities in your inner landscape, such as verbal and music capacities which are depicted in this diagram. Your verbal capacity uses words to understand concepts; your music capacity grasps melody, rhythm and other aspects of music. Each capacity enables you to experience these two different aspects of life.

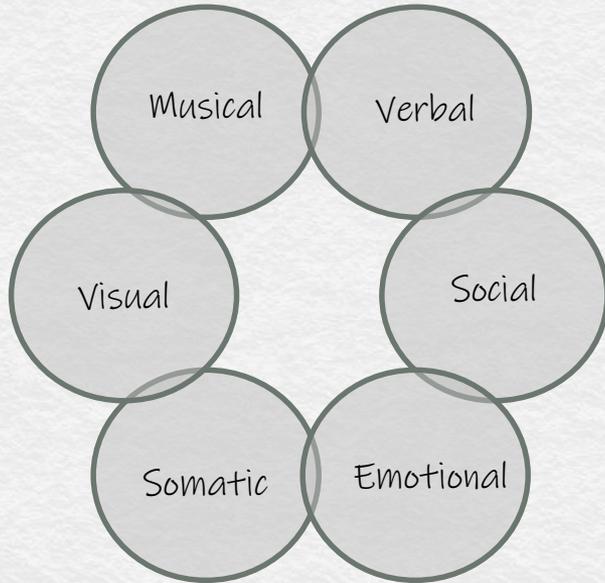
You use your musical capacity when actually listening to the Ode to Joy in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. You use your verbal capacity when listening to a lecture about that piece. Imagine that you have never heard the Ode to Joy; in that case, even a very insightful lecture about it can only give you the faintest hint of the actual experience of hearing the music performed.

Your music and verbal capacities are quite distinct from each other; they have only limited overlap. Hearing hours of lecture about music can never substitute for actually hearing the music; but just a few minutes of hearing the symphony for yourself gives you a tremendous grasp of that music. Combining the symphony experience (grasped through your music capacity) with the lecture experience (grasped through your language capacity) may enlarge the sum of your experience of the music.

Each capacity of the inner landscape has its own "language" which can only be roughly translated into the language of another capacity. Each language is different and is uniquely suited for grasping a certain kind of experiences.

Even the best language of words conveys only a fraction of music. Actually hearing a song allows your musical capacity to hear the music in its own innate "language." Discussing music with words only means something to those who have also heard the music.

Kinds of Capacities



Psychologists use the word *intelligences* to describe your various inner capacities; this diagram shows one way psychologists categorize your capacities. Your social capacity is the ability to attune to others and form appropriate relationships; your emotional capacity is the ability to know and use your feelings; your somatic capacity is your awareness of your bodily sensations, such as hunger and pain; your visual capacity is your ability to think with spatial representations, such as maps.

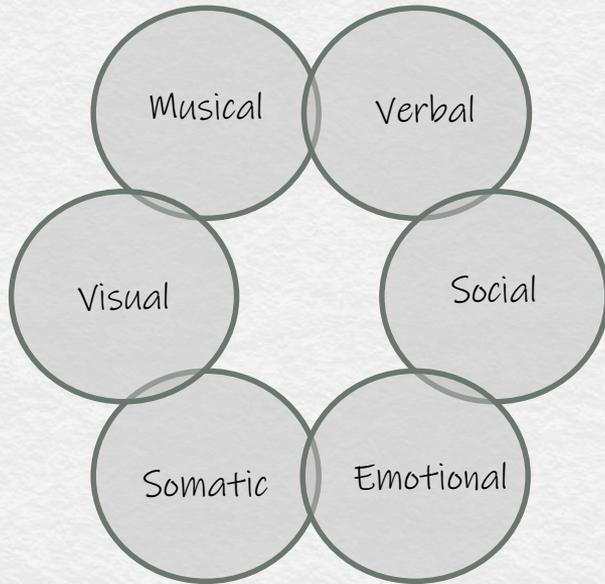
Your inner capacities can be also categorized in other ways, such as analytical and artistic. Your analytical abilities may combine language and visual capacities for engineering work; your poetic capacities may combine language and social capacities for expressing affection.

Your capacities are adapted for coping with various aspects of life. Your engineering capacities may be very suited for building a structure that doesn't fall down but they are poorly suited to writing a love poem to your partner. And vice versa: your poetic capacity can help you express your affection but they won't help you build a structure that can withstand the rain and the wind.

A perspective that you have several distinct inner capacities underlies all systems of categorizing your various intelligences. Having sufficient capacities helps deal with the many facets of

life; without a full complement, life is a struggle: people with little social capacity struggle in relationships; people with little emotion regulation struggle with anger and anxiety.

Capacities are Receptive and Expressive



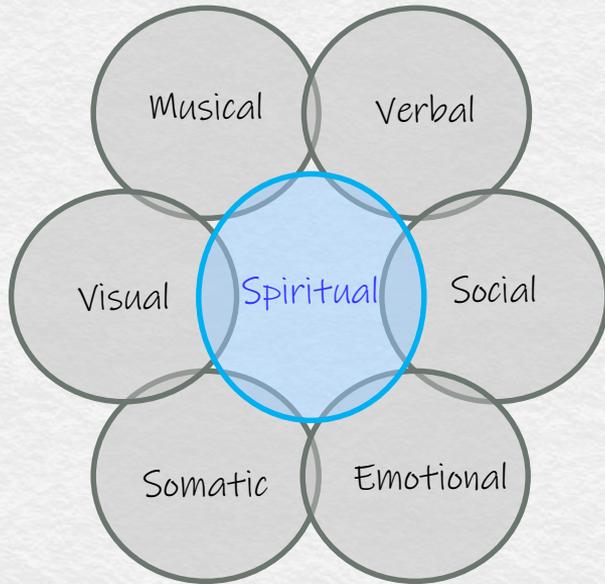
Each capacity has a receptive aspect and an expressive or active facet. For example, you can receive and understand the words that others speak and you can express your thoughts so that others understand. You can appreciate good music (receptive) and you can also play or sing (expressive). You can grasp a visual diagram (receptive) and you can also draw a picture to illustrate your ideas (expressive).

You may have developed only one side of a capacity. If you have a strongly developed receptive social capacity, you may perceive other's thoughts and feelings very keenly. But if your expressive social capacity is weakly developed, then you may struggle to communicate your thoughts and feelings to others. Or you may have the opposite imbalance if you love to communicate every last nuance of your thoughts but are almost unaware of another person's world. Evenly developing both the receptive and expressive aspects of your social capacities enhances your relationships. Evenly developing both the receptive and expressive aspects of your other capacities enhances life.

One receptive capacity cannot substitute for another one. For example, understanding a detailed diagram (your visual receptivity) of your GI tract will never replace the actual somatic experience of eating a delicious meal.

Neither can one expressive capacity substitute for another one. For example, naming all of your muscles (your verbal expression) of your muscles will never replace the actual somatic experience of exercising.

Spiritual Capacity



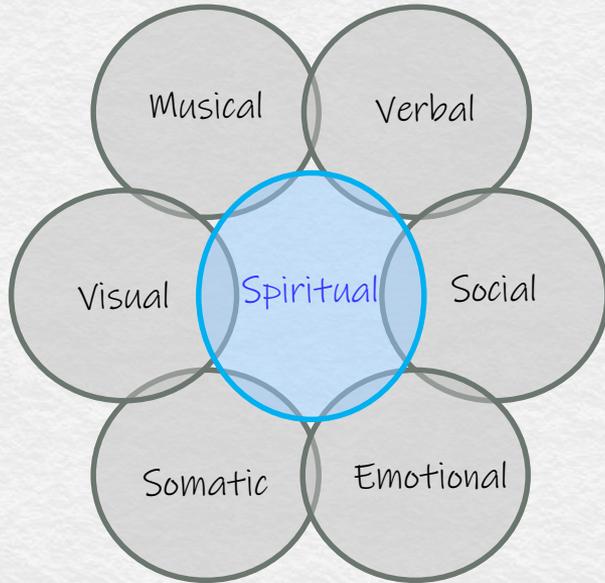
The spiritual trailblazers described or implied that you also have another capacity that is not included in most psychologists' list of your inner capacities: you also have the capacity to grasp spiritual things which can only be faintly grasped by your other capacities. Just as you have a musical capacity that enables you to really appreciate music, you also have a spiritual capacity that enables you to experience and appreciate the spiritual aspects of both your inner landscape and your outer experiences.

You are likely keenly aware of most of your psychological capacities, such as your verbal or somatic capacities. You may be less aware of your spiritual capacity because it is more subtle. Your spiritual experiences are greatly limited if you only experience them indirectly through your psychological capacities, such as through your verbal capacity when you read about spirituality. Indirect experiences of spirituality are as limited as only hearing a lecture about music without hearing the music itself. Your spiritual experiences are deepened if you experience spirit ideals and spiritual connection directly through your spiritual capacities.

Your spiritual capacity overlaps with your psychological capacities. For example, hymns can use your musical capacity as pathway to initiate a spiritual experience; or evocative poetry can use your verbal capacity to create a spiritual opening. Once initiated by

your psychological capacities, your spiritual experience may be deepened by letting go of the initial psychological entry point so your spiritual experience can deepen without being too encumbered by the limitations of the initiating psychological capacity.

Spiritual Receptivity and Expression



Like your other psychological capacities, your spiritual capacity has receptive and expressive facets. Your receptive spiritual capacity enables you to discern spiritual truth from spiritual error just as your musical capacity enables you to distinguish melodious sounds from discordant sounds; just as your somatic capacity enables you to distinguish painful or uncomfortable sensations from pleasurable sensations. Your receptive spiritual capacity enables you to recognize the affectionate character of your Divine Companion.

Your expressive spiritual capacity enables you to respond to your Divine Companion and reciprocate with your devotion and cooperation. Just as your combined receptive and expressive social capacities enable you to bond with other people, your combined receptive and expressive spiritual capacities enable you to bond with your Divine Companion.

A healthy relationship with another person can make you a better person and an unhealthy relationship with another person can be mental torment. Similarly, a solid relationship with your Divine Companion will strengthen you and a barely developed relationship with your Divine Companion will deprive you of spiritual nourishment.

Each of your capacities are designed to help you accomplish specific things in life; your spiritual capacity helps you build a relationship with your inner Divine Companion. Your spiritual

capacity enables you to receive from and respond to your Divine Companion. This inner relationship can become the template for knowing and loving the people in your life.



Perceiving Truth



Mushrooms come in many varieties. Some make a tasty meal ; others are bland and contribute nothing. Some nourish and promote health; others will make you sick or even kill you. Some make you psychotic; others give you a vision; most do neither. It's good to know the type of mushroom before you bring it into your system.

Being able to discern error from truth is an essential life skill. Confusing error with truth may lead you to believe that an ugly character is actually beautiful, that harmful behavior is actually

Information, like mushrooms, comes in many varieties. Good information helps you see more clearly; misinformation leads you to think that what is false is actually true (while believing that you that know much more than others when you are actually the one who is in error). Like mushrooms, it's good to know the type of information before you bring too much of it into your mind.

Each receptive capacity can, if it is well developed, distinguish what is good from is bad in certain aspects of life:

- visual capacity can distinguish beauty from ugliness,
- musical capacity can distinguish melody from noise,
- somatic capacity can distinguish pleasure from pain,
- verbal capacity can distinguish coherence from discord,
- social capacity can distinguish affiliation from aggression.

But only a well-developed capacity can make these distinctions. For example, if your social receptive capacity is poorly developed, you may not recognize harmful people until after they have hurt you.

good behavior. Recognizing what is true will help you see and appreciate a beautiful character and inspire you to act in good, even great and generous, ways.

Receptive Capacities: Perceiving Values

As with your psychological capacities, a well-developed spiritual receptive capacity can recognize what is spiritually true (teachings that give a high-fidelity sense of God's character) from what is spiritually false (teachings that distort God's wonderful character). Well-developed spiritual receptivity can open your eyes to God's loving nature and motivate you to seek God with all of your heart. But a weakly developed spiritual receptivity can be very harmful if you accept distorted ideas of God, blind you to God's wonderful character and alienate you from God.

The word *spiritual* is used by some people to describe wonderful psychological experiences that don't include God. Some people label their mainly psychological creativity or erudite ideas as a spiritual experience although they involved virtually none of their spiritual capacity. This use of the word *spiritual* makes fuzzy the distinction between your spiritual capacity from your other capacities.

You can't outsource the discernment of spiritual truth to another person or organization. Listening to others certainly can help as long as you can distinguish others' wisdom from their well-

Even with a highly developed spiritual capacity, your mind grasps only a fraction of God, not all of God's wonderful character. Your grasp of spiritual truth must be continually growing if you want to develop an ever better grasp of God's character. Your need for an ever deeper and more thorough experience of God never ends.

Your spiritual growth involves letting go of inaccurate ideas about God and embracing more accurate ideas of God's character so that you can love and serve God more faithfully and with greater insight and understanding. Holding too tightly to your current perspective about God can prevent you from developing an even deeper and broader sense of God's character.

You have exactly what you need, spiritual receptivity, to recognize what is spiritually true, what is spiritually beautiful and what is good from a spiritual perspective.

intentioned folly. But, after listening well, only you can decide what you consider to be spiritually true, what you consider to be the highest fidelity understanding of God's character.

Expressive Capacities: Using Values

The expressive facets of your capacities can be used for extremely different goals depending on your values. You could use your expressive verbal capacity to explain things to others and make things clearer so that they understand themselves and life more clearly. Or you could use your expressive verbal capacity to create propaganda that confuses people so that you can manipulate them.

You can direct your psychological expressive capacities toward mainly material or social goals that benefit your family (building a house for your family) or community (building infrastructure for your community). Or you can direct the same psychological capacities toward goals that benefit yourself at the expense of others, such as establishing a one-up position in your family or accumulating wealth by cheating those who helped you build that wealth.

You can do very different things with your expressive capacities, just as a hammer can be used to build something or tear it down depending on the motives of the person using it. Your motives come from your values and they determine what you will do with the capabilities of your mind. Your motives may be purely selfish ones or they may be lofty spiritual ones; they will determine what

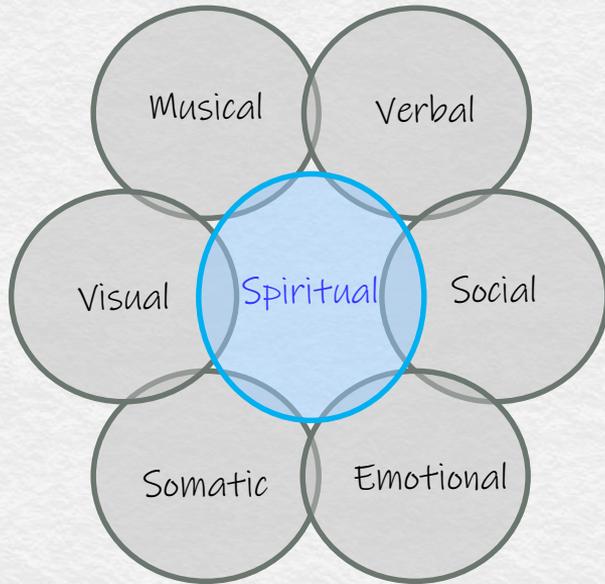
You can direct the expressive capacities of your spiritual mind to deepen your relationship with your Divine Companion by expressing appreciation of your companion's beautiful character and your gratitude for this wonderful companionship; or you can leave your spiritual thoughts and feelings unexpressed and undeveloped in your inner world.

What you create with your expressive capabilities flows from what you discern to be truly valuable. Your life holds exciting possibilities if higher values effectively direct your mind's capacities; but your life can be a terrible catastrophe if lower values drive your decisions and motivate your actions. The spiritual trailblazers would encourage you to cultivate ever higher values so that you build a strong character, that you make the most of the creative power of the expressive capacities of your inner landscape.

you will create. Your motives and actions have momentum: if you continually act selfishly, you will become capable of even more cruel and selfish acts; if you continually act spiritually, you will become capable of even more spiritually poignant acts. Ultimately, the sum of your values and motives, your accumulated decisions and actions determine the character that you build in your life.



Capacity Summary



Your psychological capacities are ways of experiencing and responding to the material and social aspects of life. Each of the six capacities is distinct and has its own language that can not be adequately translated and fully grasped using any other capacity; one capacity cannot substitute for another. Each capacity has a receptive facet and an expressive facet. Well-developed receptivity in each capacity enables you to detect goodness (or lack of goodness) in bodily sensations, music, emotions, ideas, art and relationships. Well-developed expressivity in each capacity enables you to express yourself with speech, music, art, engineering, and social connections.

Your psychological capacities cannot substitute for your spiritual capacity which enables you to experience spiritual matters directly rather than as second-hand experience through your other capacities or the experiences of others. Well-developed spiritual receptivity enhances the accuracy of your grasp of God; well-developed spiritual expressivity enables you to form a cooperative relationship with your Divine Companion. Developing your spiritual capacities significantly expands how well you adapt to life's challenges and opportunities.

When you only use your psychological capacities, you are pursuing the essential but trivial journey. You will be limited if you have poorly developed or imbalanced psychological capacities.

When you use your psychological and spiritual capacities, you are pursuing the epic journey. Your life will be enhanced when your psychological and spiritual capacities are well integrated.

Very Real but Ineffable

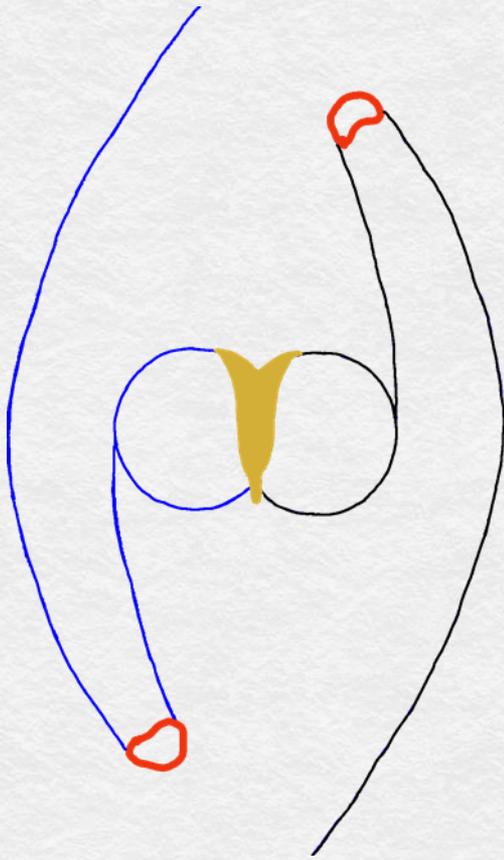
The spiritual trailblazers each had a profound personal experience of their Divine Companion. Most said that words could not begin to express the touching qualities of this relationship which opened their eyes and hearts to the amazingly beautiful character of their Divine Companion. Words could not describe Spirit and wonderfully affectionate love they shared; the experience was very real but ineffable.

Perhaps the difficulty of verbalizing inner spiritual experiences may give the mistaken impression that they are not real or that they are the product of a weak or misguided mind. But this impression is the wrong explanation for the ineffable nature of inner spiritual experiences. The spiritual trailblazers' increased inner poise and outer compassion attest to reality of their inner experiences. They felt that this inner connection was very real, the most real thing that they knew, and it affected all aspects of their lives.

If you have not yet personally experienced a connection with your Divine Companion, do not let its ineffable nature sow seeds of doubt in your mind about the very real nature of your Divine Companion. You too can experience this wonderful and beautiful inner presence if you cultivate a relationship with your Divine

A better explanation for the ineffable nature of the inner spiritual relationship is that it is experienced through your spiritual capacities; things that are experienced through one mental capacity cannot be adequately translated using the language of another capacity, such as the words of your verbal capacity. This situation is no different from the inability of using only words to express the beauty and majesty of the Ode to Joy to someone who has never heard the music. The inability to verbalize a piece of music obviously doesn't make that music unreal; it simply means that the music must be experienced first-hand by each listener using the musical capacity of his or her mind. Words cannot begin to express the beauty of even the most wonderful music or to express how moves the listener. It's best to hear another's inadequate words and then seek to have your own personal experience of the wonderful music yourself using your own musical capacity.

Companion; a first-hand personal relationship is the only way to really know and feel the actual character of your Divine Companion. And then you, like all the spiritual trailblazers before you, will struggle to express this incredibly wonderful experience, your most meaningful and real experience, in words.



The Two Facets of Life

The Two Facets of Life

Teresa and other spiritual trailblazers were not the only ones who noticed that life has two facets. Many others have described something similar; they use various metaphors to illustrate these two facets of life. Some place more emphasis on how the two facets are experienced in the inner landscape while others emphasize how the two facets appear in the outer landscape. These two facets of life create two paths that you can take through life – but only if you are aware of them.

David Brooks

David Brooks travelled extensively and he was amazed at the very different qualities of the exceptionally altruistic people he met. In his book, *The Second Mountain*, he describes two approaches to life: a Mountain 1 path which is a self-centered approach to life or a Mountain 2 path which is an approach to life based on valuing something larger than yourself. The

altruistic people he met had often had been leading a traditional life based on following an expected career path or pursuing a lifestyle largely revolving around getting security for themselves (a Mountain 1 life path). But, often after a crisis, they then made a profound shift in their values because their previous values now felt inadequate. As their deeper values eclipsed their lesser values, they made major life changes and became dedicated to goals larger and more meaningful than their own personal welfare (a Mountain 2 Life path). Brooks suggests that your values influence which of the two paths you take in your life. The highest Mountain 1 values are the comfort and survival of yourself and your tribe; your impact on the welfare of others is a far lesser concern. The highest Mountain 2 values are concerned with pursuing what is most meaningful with such great dedication that you are willing to make big personal sacrifices if necessary.

Each of the two mountains in David Brooks' metaphor (*The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life*) represents your primary allegiance, your values. Mountain 1 people are often preoccupied with consumerism and freedom to do what they like; their primary allegiance is to themselves; they value things that

make them feel better regardless of negative effects on others. Mountain 2 people are dedicated to values that transcend their personal welfare; their primary allegiance is to knowing deeper truths and serving others; they are enthused by these values in their efforts to help and assist other people.

Perspectives of a psychiatrist and philosopher

Carl Jung

Carl Jung talked about two ways of living: fully seizing the adventure of your life by accepting the call to embark on your own epic journey or contenting yourself with the more mundane matters of survival: maximizing comfort and avoiding danger. Everyone is invited to take up their own epic journey in which they must seek and develop their own deeper meaning of life. But few people respond to this call; most people content themselves with achieving material goals, pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain and anxiety. Seeking pleasure can be an endless addiction, large or small; avoiding pain and anxiety can be a never-ending obsession. Both are dead-ends that strongly distract from the epic journey.

Jung spent his life analyzing his own experiences, listening to his clients, and studying many cultures. He heard a common theme in all these strands: life gives you the opportunity to take an epic journey beyond merely surviving. This opportunity poses a core question to you: will you embark on your epic journey or will you be satisfied with merely eking out a living on this planet? The depth and strength of your character is determined by your response to this invitation to take the epic journey.

Martin Buber

Martin Buber described how you can connect with another person in a purely transactional manner (“What’s in this interaction for me?”). He called this type of interaction or relationship an *I-It relationship* to emphasize that the other person is seen as an object, not as a valued person. I-It relationships are very common. He also described how you can connect with another person in a much more intimate and compassionate manner (“What a blessing it is that I have the opportunity to get to know this person!”). He called this type of interaction or relationship an *I-Thou relationship* in which the other person is seen as an honored and valued person. I-Thou relationships are less common and require effort to cultivate.

Buber: “When two people relate authentically and humanly, [spirit] is the electricity that surges between them.”

Buber described how you can form a very strong relationship with spirit in your inner landscape; he called this relationship the *I-Eternal Thou* relationship. If you choose to nourish this inner relationship, it can become the wellspring that nourishes I-Thou relationships with others in the outer landscape.

Two Facets from a Sociology Perspective

Brené Brown

Brené Brown describes two ways of living life based on how you respond to the risks that are inherent in life. You are vulnerable to losing all your material possessions to a tornado, flood or earthquake. You are also vulnerable to losing your psychological well-being in a harsh family or abusive intimate partnership; you may find meanness in the very relationships where you had hoped to find love. You cannot escape such risks and uncertainties; you are inherently vulnerable in life. But you can choose how you respond to life's risks.

One response to the risk of being hurt or shunned is to be timid or extremely aggressive; to give up or by try to beat the odds of material losses with extreme accumulation of wealth; to dodge the risk of being hurt in relationships by isolating yourself or by being a player, a callous partner.

Based on her research, *Brené Brown* described two modes for living: whole-hearted living that accepts your vulnerability or a cautious mode that seeks protection from shame by denying your vulnerability and not living from your highest values.

Another response is to remain courageous and engaged, not allowing risks to stop or slow your pursuit of a meaningful life. Brené Brown found that people who accept their vulnerability were fully aware of the risks but lived a wholehearted anyway. Their life's passion was not dimmed by knowing that all their efforts (whether artistically, athletically, intellectually, relationally) may fail or fall short. Their love for another was not chilled by knowing that they might be left alone despite a full dedication to the relationship.

Vulnerability, an inescapable fact of life, forces you to make a decision about how you handle your vulnerability. One option is deceive yourself that you can escape the impact of risk by living a constricted life in a bubble, but reality will eventually intrude. The other option is to wholeheartedly embrace the risk and courageously pursue the great things and authentic relationships you dream of.

You can build connections with others from a place of fear (trying to avoid humiliation at any cost, even the cost of your authentic self) or from a place of courage (trusting in the power of intimacy and cooperation to bridge the distance between people).

Several Other Perspectives

Other Views

Richard Schwartz, the psychologist behind Internal Family Systems, describes how you have two options for living. One is to abdicate inner leadership to a persona; the other is intentionally inviting your Core Self to assume the leadership of your inner landscape and cultivating a robust collaboration.

Dan Gottlieb, Philadelphia psychologist, said that you can choose to live your life based on your small mind or your large mind which supports “being big” in challenging situations.

Marcus Borg, minister and theologian, describes two facets of the outer landscape: the very apparent material/psychological facets that constantly demand your attention; and the more subtle but incredibly meaningful spiritual facets of the outer landscape. Borg also describes two options for how you

cultivate your inner landscapes: the hard-hearted approach that values the material facets of life and is closed to intimacy; and the open-hearted approach that values the spiritual facets of life and enhances compassion for others.

John Elderidge described two life paths as living either based on your larger story or based on your smaller story. Zen (Suzuki) also teaches that you have a small mind and a large mind: two very distinct ways of seeing and responding to life. Others describe your core choice as accepting either the wise and kind-hearted guidance of your better angels or the short-sighted and selfish suggestions of your lesser angels.

Each perspective describes two options for life: the lesser option is the default choice of the smaller self and the wiser option that requires intentionally cultivating your larger self.

Dichotomies, such as seeing two facets in your inner world, are frowned upon in some circles because the dichotomous view might lead to judging one part as good and the other part as bad. The two-facet view of your mind doesn't see your psychological mind as bad and your spiritual mind as good; the two-facet view considers

each part as a valuable partner to the other part. The two-facet view is useful because it can lessen the chance that you consider your inner landscape as one big schmear and, as a result, miss seeing and using your mind's wonderful and distinctively different capacities.

Several More Perspectives

Many cultures have variations on the story of a young person who has a vision of two wolves in the inner landscape that represent two facets of a person: one wolf is aggressive and destructive; the other is wolf is affiliative and creative. An elder interprets the vision as signifying the importance of the young person's choice in the inner landscape ("which wolf will you feed?") because that choice will determine which facet becomes dominant in their inner life and shapes their behavior in the outer landscape.

Martha Beck, self-help author, describes the two facets as your choice for approaching life based on either your public persona that is shaped by social pressures or on your essential self. Elizabeth Lesser, self-help author, represents the two facets of the inner life with two core personas: the Warrior who prefers aggressive strategies to assure your material security and the Mystic who focuses on more meaningful values and

fosters a gracious life path rather than a forceful life path.

Other words have been used to describe the same two facets. Some theologians describe two aspects of your inner landscape: *chronos* that is concerned with everyday life and an *kairos* that is concerned with the higher aspects of life. William Blake described a "fallen state" and implied a "redeemed state" as two possibilities for your inner landscape. Ram Dass described two planes of consciousness: a worldly plane and a spiritual plane. Eric Fromm called the two facets: the Way of Having (consumerism) and the Way of Being. In most of these metaphors, the first facet presses hard on you and it can be difficult to escape its insistent demands. The second facet can be easily missed if you are too overwhelmed or not yet unaware of its existence. The second facet isn't an escape from the first facet but it can bring greater meaning to your life and elevate how you address the issues of the first facet of life.

Why take so much time fleshing out these two facets?

Many people don't see life as having two facets: the subtle spiritual facet of life can be easily drowned out by the pressing demands of managing life's frequent obstacles of making a living

and navigating relationships. But, if you take the time to experience the more subtle but quite vibrant spiritual aspects of life, you may find it helps you a great deal in addressing the problems and using opportunities that arise in your life.

The Spiritual Trailblazers' Perspective

The spiritual trailblazers saw the world as having two facets: the worldly aspects of life and spiritual aspects, the ineffable something more that is beyond the material aspects. Many used the word “temporal” for the material aspects and “eternal” for the spiritual aspects. These two aspects applied to both the outer landscape and the inner landscape; within each person is a human facet and a spiritual facet, something more than a person’s psychological aspects. Many trailblazers used the word “False Self” for the psychological aspects and “True Self” for the spiritual aspects of the inner world. Thomas Keating suggested “Own Made Self” as a less pejorative name for your psychological aspects. Each self has a radically different personality with its own language and its operating system (unique ways of processing life).

Your spiritual aspect gives you the capacity to form an intimate relationship with the Divine Companion who dwells you in your inner landscape but is not you. A social capacity is necessary for forming relationships with other people; a deficit of your social capacity limits your ability to form meaningful relationships. Similarly, a spiritual capacity is necessary for forming a relationship with your Divine Companion; neglecting your spiritual capacity can create a temporary deficit in your ability to cultivate a cooperative relationship with your Divine Companion. Your two facets create two options for living your life: either as a solo venture in which you rely only on your psychological aspects or as a cooperative venture in which you weave together your human resources with your Divine Companion’s contributions.

Implicit in the spiritual trailblazers’ perspective is that you are not alone in your inner world. “What a lonely existence!” they would lament. In addition to having a spiritual capacity, you are also blessed with a wonderful inner companion choice with whom you can have a relationship. Your spiritual capacity includes the receptive ability to sense the nature of your Divine Companion through your own inner experiences and the expressive ability to

make a response to your Divine Companion. You can choose to cultivate a relationship with the one who desires and loves you; or you can choose to refuse that invitation to love and instead live a life that relies only on your own resources. From the spiritual trailblazers’ perspective, your spiritual capacity comes bundled with Divine Companion who wants to collaborate with you and give you love and guidance.

Two Facets

Your choice of life path begins in your inner world where, if you so desire, you can draw close to God and see God's character. The very personal love that your Divine Companion has for you will illuminate your own character: you are so beloved by God that God desires to dwell within you so that you can respect yourself as much as God does. Having experienced God's respect for you makes you more capable of a robust respect for others.

a delightful and creative collaboration with your indwelling Divine Companion. You are blessed with his choice because your inner landscape is home to both you and your Divine Companion. This core choice sets the tone for your whole life.

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Two Facets: Summary

Thinkers of many backgrounds and over many centuries arrived at a similar perspective: that life has two facets and your mind has two similar facets. Both spiritual and secular thinkers define the first facet as the material aspects (getting food and shelter) and the basic social aspects (managing relationships with friends and foes). In your inner world, the first facet is your own psychological capabilities. You may be consumed with this first facet, in both your inner world and your outer life, and have no other concerns.

But the thinkers were also clear that there's more to life than just the material and basic social aspects, that there's a second facet of life concerned with deeper meaning and more intimate relationships. Embracing the second facet of life is optional and requires an awareness that it exists and a desire to engage with it. Spiritual, but not the secular, thinkers define the second facet as the possibility of cultivating your own unique

personal relationship with God who dwells within you.

The two facets of life present you with a core decision to make: Will you concern yourself with one or both facets of life? In your inner world, will you use only your psychological capabilities or will you weave together your psychological and spiritual capabilities? These two options can be called the solo psyche-only choice or the integrated psyche+spirit choice. Each person who embraces both facets of life weaves them together in highly personalized ways that reflect their personality. No two people weave an identical psyche+spirit tapestry in the inner landscape as reflected by the various tones and textures of the descriptions of different trailblazers. Yet through all of these personal variations runs the common thread of the possibility of living a larger life, a more courageous life with enhanced understanding of deeper meaning and more compassionate service to other people.

The demands of the outer landscape can be so pressing that they blind you to the existence of the other spiritual facets of life. At times, a secular attitude may pervade most minds and lead many people to ignore or even attack the reality of the spiritual

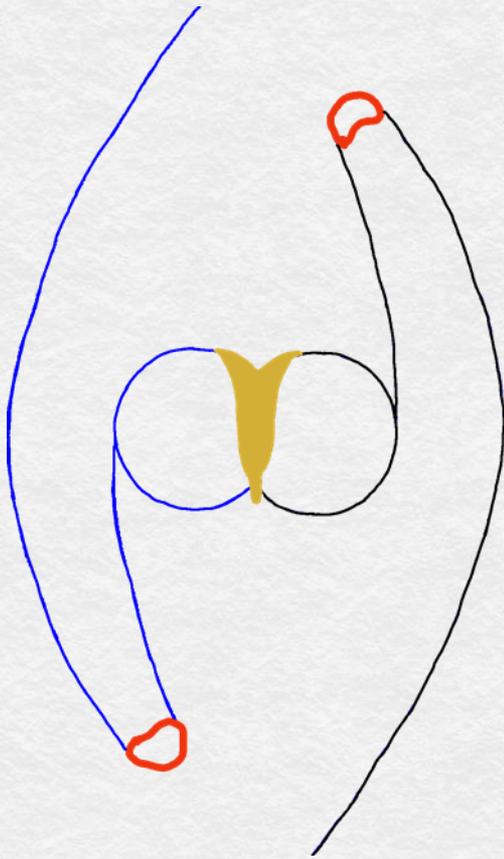
aspects of life. In such circumstances, the wisdom of others may help you open your mind and explore your inner spiritual aspects, help you begin seeking the Something More of life, and to open your heart to the Someone More waiting within for you.

Two Facets: Summary

Two Paths of Life/Two Paths through Life		
<i>David Brooks</i>	Mountain 1	Mountain 2
<i>Carl Jung</i>	(Trivial Journey)	Epic Journey
<i>Martin Buber</i>	I-It	I-Thou
<i>Richard Schwartz</i>	Persona-led life	Core Self-led life
<i>Dan Gottlieb</i>	Act small	Be big
<i>Two wolves myth</i>	Aggressive wolf	Affiliative wolf
<i>Brené Brown</i>	Timid	Whole-hearted
<i>Marcus Borg</i>	Material world only	“Something More”
<i>John Etheridge</i>	Small story	Larger story
<i>Martha Beck</i>	Public persona	Essential self
<i>Elizabeth Lesser</i>	Warrior	Mystic
<i>Zen</i>	Small mind	Large mind
<i>Contemplatives</i>	False Self (own made self)	True Self
<i>Spiritual trailblazers</i>	Solo life Psyche only	Divine collaboration Psyche+spirit

Of course, the idea of two facets to your life (in both the inner landscape and the outer landscape) isn't proved because many different people have experienced two very distinct parts of their lives and the lives of the people they know intimately. The common experiences of many good thinkers only suggests that the

idea of the two facets of life is worth your consideration. By your own experiences, not the thinking and experiences of others, you can decide whether this perspective seems true based on your own thinking. The worth of this idea can be assessed by whether it helps you grow and whether it enhances your relationships.



The Foothills and the Mountain

A Metaphor for the Two Facets of Life

Some concepts are quite widely understood and they can be readily included in general conversation without any introduction; some examples are fossil fuels, healthy eating habits, the dilemma of policing, or the impact of social media. People may have very different ideas about each topic but everyone understands very clearly what topic is being discussed when these terms are used.

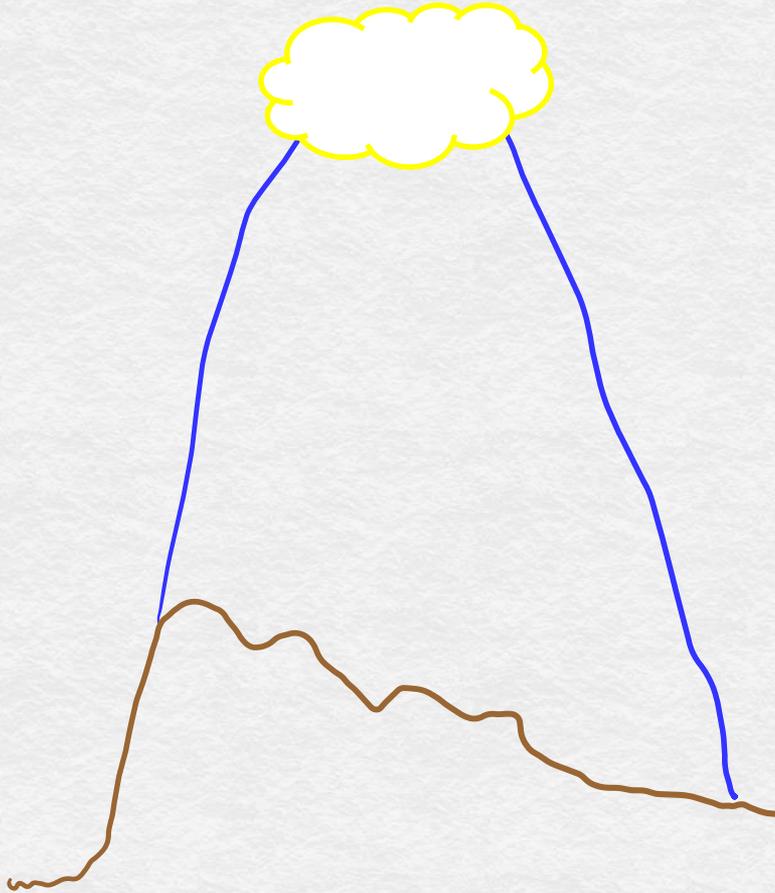
But the concepts of the inner landscape and the two facets of life don't have commonly used terminology that is understood by most people. These terms don't evoke a clear idea in the minds of many who hear them; these concepts need extensive explanation before people have a common basis for discussing these ideas and their implications.

The two-facet spiritual perspective doesn't resonate widely enough to be easily included in the general conversation. Each spiritual trailblazer used his or her own vocabulary to express his or her individual experiences; the different words can obscure the common thread that runs through all of their experiences. Their thinking can be so helpful that it deserves assistance, such as an extended metaphor, to make it more readily included in the general conversation. A useful metaphor must include the two inner facets (psychological and spiritual) and how they create a choice for two approaches to life. An adaption of David Brook's metaphor, changing Mountain 1 and Mountain 2 to the Foothills and the Mountain, may make it easier to incorporate the spiritual trailblazers' perspective into general conversation.

The poverty of having no word for a concept. You may not recognize concepts when you have no words for them. Imagine you didn't have a word for gaslighting; it still exists but you would have a diminished awareness of its characteristics and it would be hard to think and talk about it. The problem is compounded when the concept is not a concrete object but a value or an experience; without a name for it, you might completely miss it.

The value of a metaphor. A good metaphor uses familiar ideas to make unfamiliar ideas more accessible and to help you discover ideas which are easily overlooked. The inner landscape metaphor can open you to exploring the aspects right inside you in your own inner landscape. The Epic Journey metaphor can open your eyes to the possibility of choosing to pursue values that are higher but more subtle than other values.

The Foothills and The Mountain



The Foothills and the Mountain represent the two facets of life: the Foothills represent the material facets of life and the Mountain represents the spiritual facets of life. The Foothills are the foundation of the Mountain. The spiritual aspects of life, the Mountain, cannot be separated from the material aspects of life, the Foothills. You can choose to limit yourself to only the Foothills but any ascent of the Mountain must start on paths that begin in the Foothills.

You, a hiker living in this terrain of Foothills and Mountain, have two options for your destinations. Your first option is to spend all your time walking the Foothills paths. With this option, you are completely focused on the material facets of life. You may have selected these paths when you are overwhelmed with just meeting your basic material needs or perhaps you might be obsessed with getting ever more material comforts. Your other option is to spend some time on the Mountain paths exploring the spiritual facets of yourself and life. When you return from the Mountain paths to the Foothills paths, you will likely return with new perspectives for how you meet the material and social obligations and opportunities of the Foothills.

The brown line is the Foothills, brown representing earthly concerns. The blue line is the Mountain, blue representing spiritual concern. The white cloud represents the spiritual aspects that we cannot yet grasp.

Possible Destinations and Choices

You are like a hiker who lives in a terrain with many possible destinations: you must go to some mandatory places but you only go to the optional destinations if you choose to do so. You must go to some places (do certain things) to get food, water and supplies; even here you have some options for what places you go to meet these needs. You may choose one place because it is convenient, another place because it has better supplies, or another place because it has better prices. You make your choice based on what you value most at that time: convenience, quality or thrift.

Other destinations are completely optional; you may hike to a place because it has beautiful views of nature, a café with friendly people, or good music. You make your choice based on what you value more at that moment: beauty, comradery, or entertainment. Choosing an optional path requires curiosity about what lies beyond your day-to-day paths and courage to embark on new paths.

Each choice involves your awareness and your values. You can't choose a destination if you don't know that it even exists. Your values are how you prioritize one destination as being more

The terrain of life is vast and you don't know all of the possible destinations that you might go to. If you are curious, you can continually explore to learn about new destinations beyond the ones you already know. Your explorations will be shaped by what you prefer in a destination; your preferences are your values that guide your choices.

If you seek new destinations, you can get ideas about possibilities from listening to other hikers describe their hikes and destinations. You discard some trails because those trails don't feature what you value; you pursue other trails because they have features that you value.

Or you may explore uncharted areas and blaze your own trail. Perhaps you glimpsed something you really liked, something that you value a great deal, and you created a path in hopes that it brings you closer to what you had only glimpsed slightly. Many times the experience of great beauty is found on these personally created trails.

worthwhile than another. If you really value a certain destination, you will be motivated to attempt even very demanding paths because you treasure the destination so much.

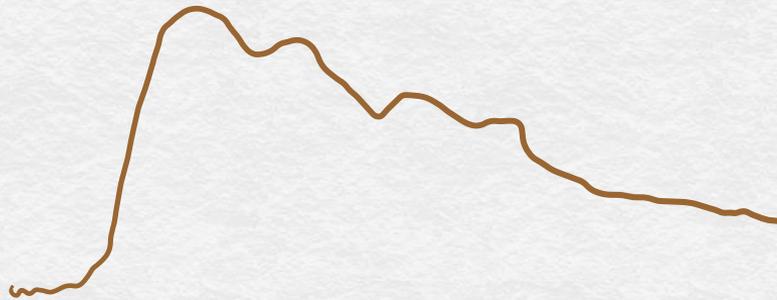
The Foothills-only Perspective

This diagram illustrates the Foothills-only perspective of life that excludes the spiritual aspects of life in the world and within your own inner landscape. This completely secular perspective sees the outer landscape as purely material without any “Something More” and sees the inner landscape as purely psychological without any spiritual aspects or “Someone More.” Some may hold a Foothills-only perspective of life because they have never experienced or learned that life may contain anything more. When the *zeitgeist*, the prevailing perspective of most people, is a Foothills-only mentality, it can be difficult to even consider that you or life might have a spiritual facet.

Others may hold a Foothills-only perspective if they have become addicted to material success, such as luxurious amounts of wealth, extreme pleasures, and excessive concern with social status and power.

Even when you value the Mountain paths of spirituality, you may temporarily hold a Foothills-only perspective when you are overwhelmed by life’s pressures and challenges. These times are like periods when clouds entirely obscure the Mountain from your view.

This picture represents seeing all of life’s possibilities from a secular perspective; it represents the psyche-only perspective that you have only human but no spiritual inner capacities.



Foothills-only Paths

The Foothills have many paths, some are lower or higher than others. The low paths are very self-centered and selfish ways of living; the higher paths are more cooperative and altruistic.

Some people follow a low path of extreme competition in which their main motive is besting others and earning an super-sized piece of material wealth. If they “succeed” in getting many material goods, they are likely to strongly resist leaving this path which has produced so much material gains.

Some people consistently take an even lower Foothill path where they readily embrace cruelty as an acceptable means for getting wealth and power. Perhaps they were treated very badly by others, and so they feel entitled to seek revenge against their persecutors, actual and perceived. They may be devotees of this path and vehemently resist anything that might interfere with their ability to be cruel and seek revenge.

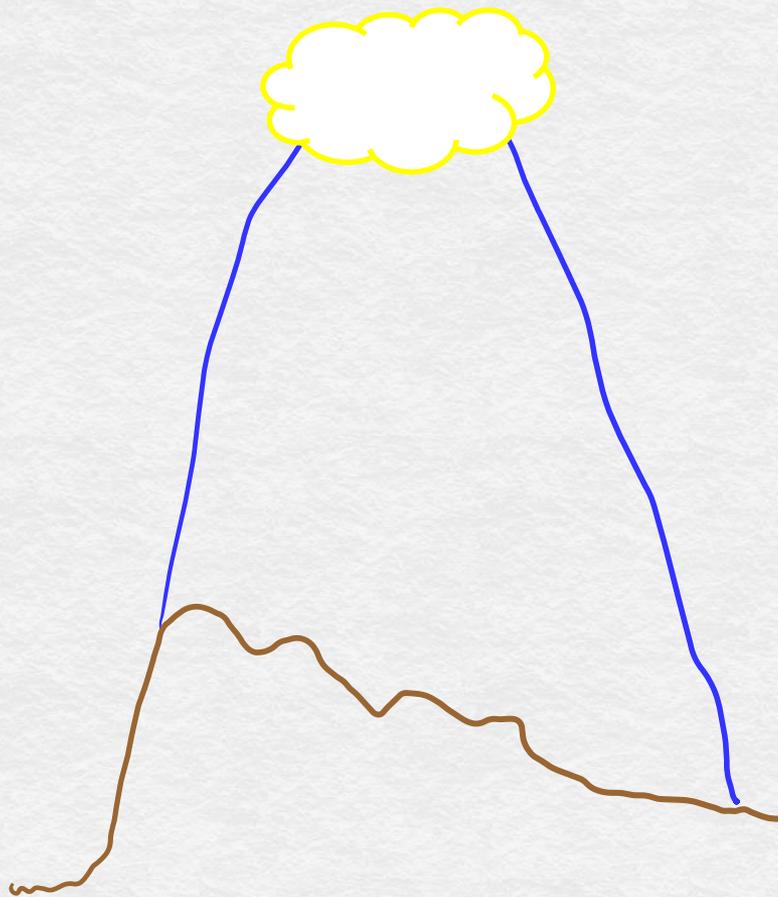
A Foothills-only mentality is often set in stone and very resistant to change. This mentality is likely to dismiss other possible paths, such as spirituality, which are seen as stupid and useless because they don't seem to lead to any quick material/social gain.

Some people consistently take the higher Foothill path of cooperation and fairness so that as many people as possible can share in the material necessities of life. They are very altruistic and their actions may or may not have a spiritual foundation. They are very dedicated to being a force for good in the world. If they become self-satisfied, they may have little desire to explore new paths beyond the high Foothills.

You may likely stick to your chosen Foothills-only pathway (competition, callousness/cruelty or cooperation/compassion) with great tenacity. Those behaviors which you have used many times become like a well-worn path, the easiest way to get navigate life. The intentional choice to change your preferred path takes much energy and effort; without a good reason to trust that a new and better path exists, you are likely to stay on your preferred Foothills-only paths which you adopted earlier in life.

A Foothill+Mountain mentality is often open-minded and open-hearted. It actively seeks spiritual growth and avoids anything, such as absolute devotion to a material goal, that interferes with drawing close to the Divine Companion and serving others.

The Foothills+Mountain Perspective



Some people, even when immersed in the pressures and pleasures of the Foothills, sense that the terrain of the inner landscape includes more than just the Foothills. You may sense, perhaps to a smaller or greater degree, that life holds some wonderful spiritual possibilities. This sense leads you to spend some time seeking spiritual destinations on the Mountain and, of course, you also spend time each day in the Foothills.

Some may hike and see only the lower trails on the Mountain; others may hike much further up the Mountain. The ultimate peak of the mountain is obscured from nearly everyone's view. Spiritual trailblazers who spent much time on the Mountain thought that your spiritual growth has virtually no limits; even after great growth, some aspects of spirituality will still remain a mystery.

The Foothills+Mountain paths always involve inner discovery, an increased awareness of all parts—psychological and spiritual—of your inner landscape. You can make only elementary progress on the Mountain by reading or hearing about others' experiences of the Mountain; you must undertake your own inner exploration and transformation to make significant progress on the Mountain.

This image represents a combined secular+spiritual perspective of the outer landscape or a combined psyche+spirit view of the inner landscape.

Common Foothills+Mountain Elements

The various paths on the Mountain, if followed to their ends, lead to the same destination: deeper bonding with your Divine Companion. The exact path you take on the lower slopes of the Mountain are less important than your desire to ascend ever higher, to form an ever deeper bond with and cooperate more with your Divine Companion.

Many spiritual trailblazers had a strong desire or yearning to get to know God more intimately. Although you can learn about God's character through study in the outer landscape, the spiritual trailblazers found the inner path more enlightening for getting to know God. Directly experiencing their Divine Companion in a loving connection helped them go where knowledge alone could not take them. Their deep love for God deepened their grasp of God's character creating a cycle: they more they knew God, the more they loved God; and the more they loved God, the more they knew God.

The spiritual trailblazers experienced being loved by Someone far above their league, their Divine Companion. Having been the recipient of such wonderful but unearned love, they generously gave what they had received so abundantly. They wanted to

Many spiritual trailblazers emphasize the importance of cultivating an attitude of humility. Humility is not debasing your view of yourself but elevating your view of your Divine Companion. Humility is recognizing that, even if you are very wise, your Divine Companion is far wiser than you; humility is recognizing that, even if you are very loving, your Divine Companion is far more loving than you. Teresa of Avila taught that humility is like a key to open the innermost rooms of your Interior Castle. A reverent attitude recognizes the great beauty of your Divine Companion and widens a passage through which your Divine Companion can pour ever more affection and assistance into your spiritual mind.

The spiritual trailblazers also emphasized the value of a cooperative attitude, of being open to the Divine Companion's leadings. The Divine Companion treated them as an essential partner, not an inferior, in their joint spiritual endeavors.

share what they had received; having been appreciated by their Divine Companion, they appreciated even marginalized people. Their sharing was gracious not self-righteous. Sharing what they had received was essential to their continued growth.

Foothills-only OR Foothills+Mountain

The nature of the terrain of life presents you with two choices: will you remain on the Foothills-only paths or will you explore the Mountain paths as well? Will you pursue a Foothills-only life or a Foothills+Mountain life? You must walk the Foothill paths of life; the material aspects of life cannot be avoided but you can, if you want, incorporate spirituality into your approach to dealing with the demands of living a good life.

The Foothills are not to be despised; they are where you learn about the world and connect with other people. But restricting yourself to only these paths limits you by ignoring the spiritual facets of life and neglecting the spiritual capacities of your own mind.

The choice to spend time on Mountain paths often begins in your inner landscape when you spend time in your inner

dwelling, when you explore the capacities of your spiritual mind where the spiritual trailblazers made first contact with their Divine Companion. Here you first begin to grasp some of the wise and wonderfully tender character of your Divine Companion; here you began your inner dialogue with your Divine Companion; and here you may ultimately betroth yourself to the Divine Companion and give your full-hearted consent to collaborating together in life.

Spending time on the Mountain paths doesn't remove the need to walk Foothill paths, but your Mountain experience can transform how you approach the Foothills paths, how you approach life's material demands and how you interact with others. Spending time on Mountain paths will help you forge I-Thou relationships in which you can be more attuned to others and, if possible, assist them.

The Foothills and The Mountain metaphor is analogous to other ways of describing the two aspects of life. For example, the Foothill-only paths represent living your life as a small story (Etheridge) or taking the trivial journey (Jung). This life is analogous to a life lived from the False Self (contemplatives).

The Mountain represents living your life as a larger story (Etheridge) or taking the Epic Journey (Jung). The Mountain life is analogous to a life lived from the True Self (contemplatives). Your two options are living either a Foothills-only life or a Foothills+Mountain life.

Pausing and Noticing

In the Foothills and Mountain metaphor, you are hiking the terrain of life and choosing which paths to take. Perhaps you are a firmly entrenched hiker of certain Foothills paths. Like a creature of habit, you may walk, almost mindlessly, many times on the same paths without really paying attention to the path or considering why you always take this path and not another. You may be busily walking along your usual paths and never lift your eyes from the ground. It can be very valuable to pause in your busyness to look around and notice other aspects of life that you may be missing. Pausing on your well-trod Foothills path gives you an opportunity to consider the path that you are taking: does this path serve you well? Is this path possibly harming yourself or others without you noticing? Might another Foothills path serve you better or do less harm? Noticing is a form of mindfulness; noticing is the opposite of mindlessly taking the same path over and over.

The two kinds of paths represent how you spend your time and energy in the outer landscape: the activities (or inactivities) that consume your time; how you engage with other people. Your choice of paths in the terrain of life is strongly influenced by where you invest your time and energy in your inner landscape: your prevailing

When you pause on your regular Foothills route, you might also notice that some trailheads on the Foothills paths lead to Mountain paths. Perhaps you've been too preoccupied to consider exploring the Mountain paths thinking that you don't have the time and energy to walk them. Or perhaps the very idea of the Mountain strikes you as the wishful thinking or delusions of poorly-informed people. You can continue to hold such preconceptions or you can explore the Mountain paths for yourself and decide based on your own experience.

Enough people have described the beauty and helpfulness of the Mountain paths that it's worth your time to see if you might also find them beautiful and helpful. People who have hiked the Mountain paths say that it's very hard to describe them adequately, that these paths really need to be personally experienced to understand them.

thoughts about yourself and others; the negative or positive feelings that you may nurse; the ideas that you frequently welcome into your mind. Your thoughts and feelings are reinforced when you take the same path over and over; taking a new Mountain path can bring a big shift in your thoughts and feelings.

The Mountain Path Is Open to Anyone

Regardless of your external circumstances—how much freedom you have to choose your paths in the Foothills—you always have a high degree of freedom to make choices in your inner landscape. No domineering person or harsh circumstances can deprive you of the presence of your Divine Companion or stop you from forging a robust relationship with your Divine Companion.

External pressures of life may force you onto a Foothills path you detest: a poorly paying or unsatisfying job, an unhealthy relationship, or dislocation because of a war or natural disaster. You may have very little freedom to leave such a path but you still have freedom to make choices in your inner landscape that nourish your spirituality and give you the satisfying Mountain views.

Or you may have been fortunate to have the freedom and opportunities to pursue Foothills paths you really enjoy: a

good job, relationship or living circumstances. Yet with your fortuitous circumstances in the outer landscape, you may not make the inner choices that would enhance your spirituality.

Your core inner decision is whether you spend all your time in your outer dwellings, your psychological mind, or whether you spend time in both your outer and inner dwellings, in both your psychological and spiritual minds. The first choice will create a Foothills-only life and the second choice will create a Foothills+Mountain life. The quality of your life hinges on your decision (or indecision).

Your decision may be hampered by not even being aware of your inner dwellings: how can you choose something that you don't even know exists? The experiences of the spiritual trailblazers may help you become more aware of the full range of options within you so that you can make a more informed choice in this core decision.

The two inner choices could be called the psyche-only option and the psyche+spirit option. Choosing the psyche-only option means that valuing and using only your psychological capacities; this inner attitude leads to staying on the Foothills-only paths.

Choosing the psyche+spirit option means using both psychological and spiritual capacities and especially valuing your spiritual capacities; this inner attitude leads to taking the Foothills+Mountain paths. Values, choices and paths are linked.

Tracker App

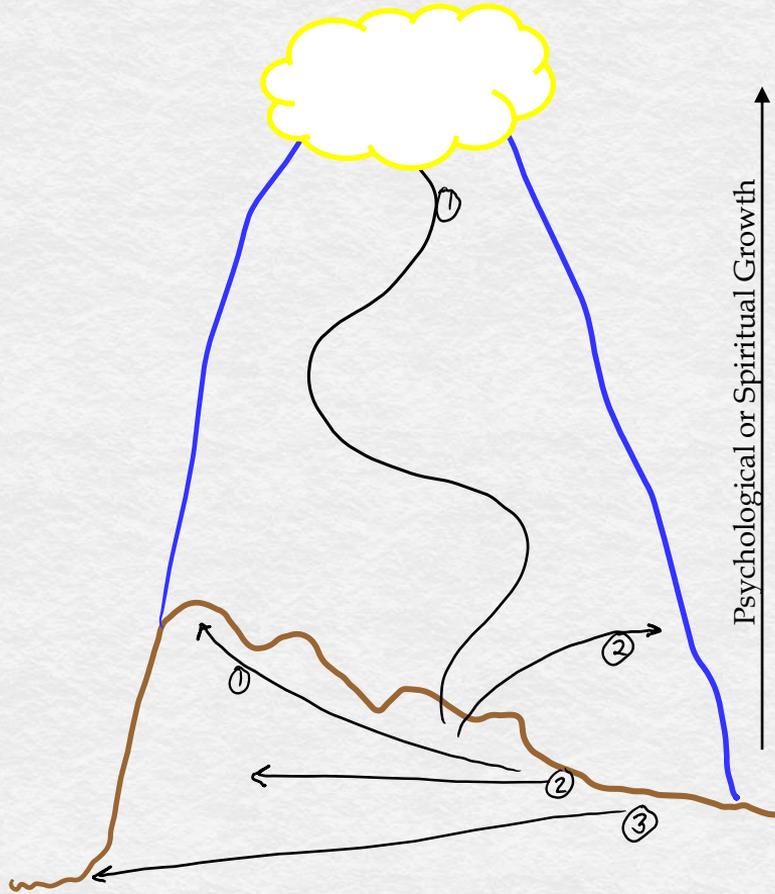


Imagine an application, a software program, that tracks each path you take and each destination you visit as you hike over the terrain of Foothills and Mountains. Displaying all of the traces at once shows your preferred paths and the destinations you like the most. The tracings become a visual record of what you value and show how your values translated into the ways that you have spend your time and energy.

The thin black line represents a moderate life that is not overly selfish or overly altruistic. The thin brown line represents an often altruistic life with a half-hearted interest in spirituality. The thin blue line represents a whole-hearted interest in spirituality and a very compassionate service to others. The tracings are a way to visualize the character that you are building in life.

The patterns of the paths you take may shift over time as you go through the stages of life, as you mature or stagnate, and as you face times of stress or relative calm. Being aware of the paths you take, and the paths you don't take, may help you decide how you want to change your patterns for your remaining time in this terrain. Taking new paths may be difficult initially but will likely become easier the more frequently you walk the new paths.

The Slope of a Path



The lines in the image are the summation of all the paths measured by the tracker. The vertical axis represents overall psychological or spiritual growth, not a single hike. An ascending path (1) represents a life of growth; a horizontal path (2) represents stagnation; a descending path (3) represents regression and stagnation in life. The left-to-right position represents the variety of paths that you can take.

An ascending path on the Foothills represents becoming more compassionate towards others; the top of the Foothills represents the best social interactions that you can muster strictly on your own psychological resources. An ascending Foothill path brings you closer to the trailheads leading to the Mountain, but you may – or may not – choose to explore those paths. Some Foothill paths are completely horizontal representing, for example, a person who may amass much material wealth without any psychological growth. The lowest Foothills paths represent a person who may enjoy being cruel to others.

An ascending path on the Mountain represents increasingly intimate connection with your Divine Companion that leads to cooperatively working together. The Mountain top is always higher than your highest ascent; you can always go further up the Mountain. Some may become entranced with the views from the lower slopes of the Mountain and stop climbing, stop growing their Divine Companion relationship.

National Parks Metaphor

National Parks have several kinds of paths for experiencing nature. Most people observe the scenery from convenience overlooks by the road offering exceptionally beautiful views. Some of those people will venture out of the parking lot onto adjacent well-marked asphalt walkways with many educational displays and safety features that give a high degree of protection. Far fewer visitors will venture onto the backcountry trails that lead into the interior of National Parks where they can experience the park in a more immersive way. These long trails are often not well marked and have far fewer safety protections. On the backcountry trails, you will meet people who can help guide you as well as people who are just as bewildered as you are.

The National Parks represent the Mountain where you engage with the spiritual facets of life. The lower Mountain paths, like the overlooks in the National Parks, are where many people explore the well-marked perspectives left by spiritual authors; on these trails, you learn these well-defined teachings. You may become quite knowledgeable in a second-hand way but not have your own personal experiences. This level of knowledge is fairly safe and may feel satisfying enough that you venture no farther; but real intimacy comes only from your own personal engagement,

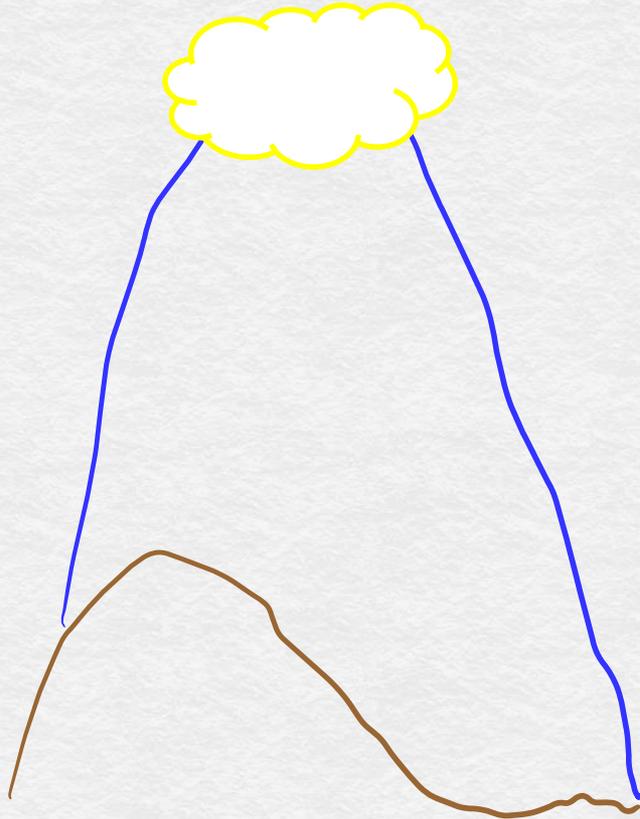
not by learning all about someone else's experiences of intimacy.

The somewhat higher Mountain paths, like the asphalt-paved paths adjacent to an overlook, are where some people may develop a well-defined spiritual practice; here you may experience some of the wonders of the spiritual mind and begin experiencing intimacy with your Divine Companion.

The higher Mountain paths, like the backcountry paths of the National Parks, are where a brave few make their own unique and personal journey into the less well charted paths where they personally engage with their Divine Companion quite deeply. Here you courageously travel the uncharted paths where your Divine Companion can be experienced first-hand; here you can happily cede inner leadership to your Divine Companion and enthusiastically follow the paths your Divine Companion suggest to you.

The information and guides on the lower Mountain paths may give you clues about the upper paths but it takes clear understanding, intentional choice and strong desire to take the higher Mountain paths. It takes courage and stamina to personally hike the higher paths but they are the most direct way to experience your relationship with your Divine Companion.

The Foothills and The Mountain Summary

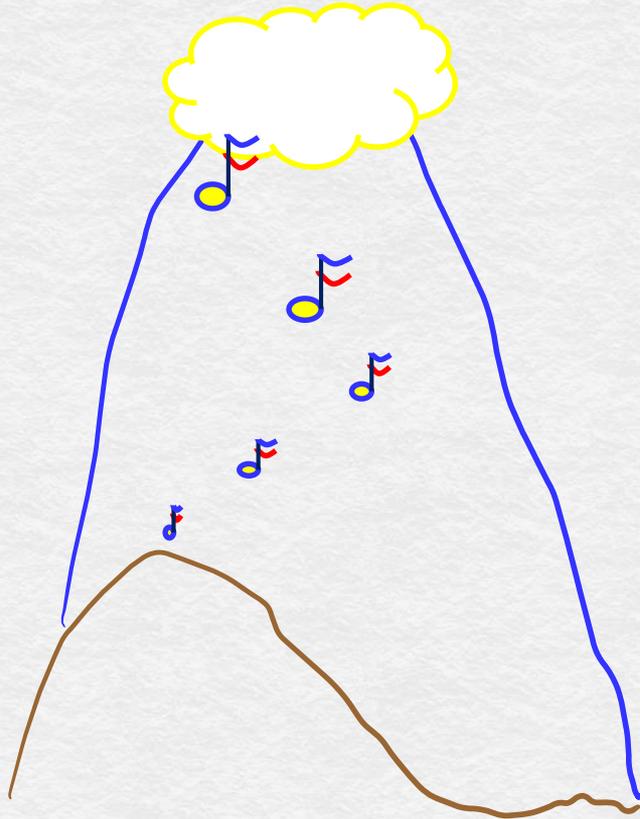


You must walk the Foothill paths of life, the material and psychological facets of life which you must face and respond to, such as finding work, paying the rent and forming healthy relationships. Your preferred Foothills paths, preferred coping strategies, are easy to take and hard to leave behind.

The terrain of life also offers you the option to explore Mountain paths, the spiritual facets of life such as seeking to personally experience the spiritual aspects of your inner landscape; desiring ever deeper dialogue with your Divine Companion; wanting to undertake ever more challenging spiritual projects. Your inner landscape has sufficient capacities – your spiritual mind – to get to undertake Mountain adventures, to know God’s character ever more accurately via your first-hand encounters with your Divine Companion. This inner experience transforms how you will address the Foothills issues you encounter.

You can choose whether to live wholly in the Foothills or spend time on the Mountain as well. This outer choice of paths in life will be strongly influenced by your values that form your choices: egoistic, psyche-only values lead to walking Foothills-only paths; a cooperative psyche+spirit values lead to walking Foothills and Mountain paths.

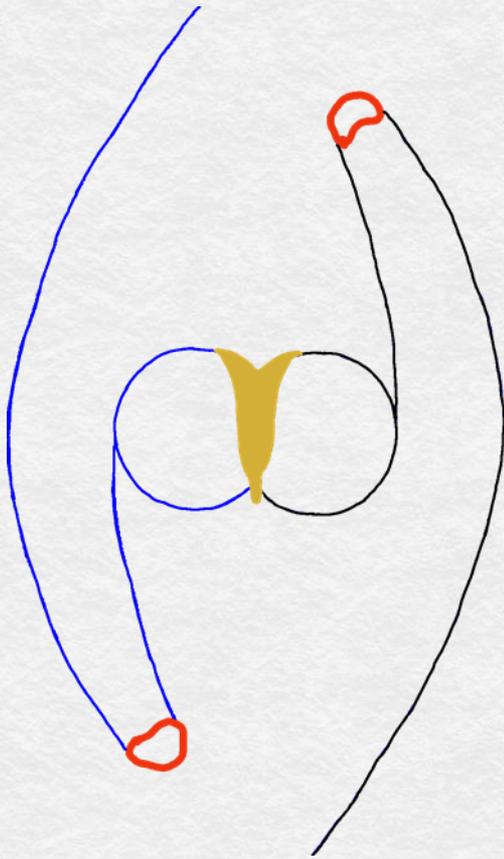
The Sweet Song of the Mountain



The spiritual trailblazers seemed to hear a sweet song emanating from the Mountain, a song so beautiful that they were irresistibly drawn to Mountain paths to better hear the sacred music. The song snapped them out of the Foothills-only trance that said: “This material world is everything; you have nothing more than your psychological mind.” The song assured them that Something More exists; the voice singing the song assured them that Someone More exists. The song pulled them beyond even the finest religious paths they knew in the Foothills.

The song is not a song for spectators; it is a song for dancers. The song activated the listener’s feet like music that makes you want to dance: the spiritual trailblazers could not stand still. They climbed the Mountain paths to hear the song more clearly and enjoy it more fully. They found that God was the voice singing this song of exquisite beauty, a song far more beautiful than any other human, even religious, song they knew.

The Mountain song is often faint in the Foothills and can be easily missed in the din of life. But the song is always being sung, calling to anyone – perhaps you – who is willing to pause and listen and let the melody move you to climb your own Mountain path that brings you closer to the Singer of the song.



End of part 1

End of Part 1

This PDF file is the **first of three parts** of the *Inner Landscape* book. The first part is an introduction to the concept of the inner landscape as described by spiritual trailblazers and psychologists.

Each of the various metaphors highlights certain features of your inner landscape. The multiple intelligences model highlights that you have various capacities and each one can be more or less developed. The IFS clan metaphor highlights the person-like characteristics of your inner facets.

The various metaphors for your inner landscape share certain common core features: a rich (not homogenous) set of inner facets; inner facets need to be growing not stagnating; the central role of inner dialogue among your parts; the core ability to decide and connect; an inner healing and guiding

presence that surpasses your own personal abilities; the value of cultivating a close and cooperative relationship with this presence who has many names and is called your Divine Companion in this book.

The **second part** of the book is in a separate PDF file and it describes the various parts of the inner landscape in greater detail.

The **third part** of the book is in a separate PDF file and it describes practices for individuals, dyads and groups based on the inner landscape perspective.

Perhaps one of the metaphors of the inner world doesn't ring true for you based on your own experiences. Perhaps another one of the metaphors of the inner world clarifies many things and fosters growth for you. The goal of an inner map or a metaphor is to support your growth: growth in the breadth and clarity of

your understanding of your self. . .
But perhaps the overlapping agreement between the metaphors suggests that the resulting map of your inner landscape may be useful to your growth and healing.

References

References for ideas paraphrased in this book are listed below if you want to read an author's ideas in their own words.

Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582) was born into a well-to-do family who had converted to Christianity before she was born. She had a lively social (perhaps superficial) life before entering the convent and having profound personal experiences of the very affectionate embrace of her Beloved. Her inner experiences led her to reform her order in order to reflect her reverence for God; she was harshly viewed by the religious hierarchy of her time (when the Inquisition was winding down).

The Interior Castle describes her view of human nature with an extended metaphor of a castle with many dwellings to . Her autobiography, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus*, describes four stages of intimacy with God. Some of her poems are available online at poetseers.org/spiritual-and-devotional-poets.

Lectio divina is a way of slowly reading a small amount of text multiple times to allow the spirit of the text to penetrate your heart and mind deeply. The goal of lectio divina is not to memorize a text (although that might happen and be useful throughout your day), but to allow the spirit of the text to come

Teresa of Avila Quotes

“Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.”

“Mental prayer [...] is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends. It means taking the time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.”

“To have courage for whatever comes in life – everything lies in that.”

“May God protect us from gloomy saints.” “I do not fear Satan half as much as I fear those who fear him.”

“If Christ Jesus dwells in [a person], as friend and noble leader, [that person] can endure all things, for Christ helps and strengthens us and never abandons us. He is a true friend.”

alive in a reader in a new and unique way, to give vibrant life to the thoughts of the writer. You may enjoy savoring the works of these authors and paraphrasing them so that their ideas live again, not as carbon copies, but as a new creation that is a blend of their ideas and your experiences and perspective.

References

Bernard McGinn (1936 -) is a Roman Catholic professor who devoted most of his career to ensuring the availability of the writings of the spiritual trailblazers whom he calls mystics. Many of the writings of the mystics were not readily available in the 1960's when he began his life work. He wrote a series of eight books (*The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*; a total of 4600 pages) of annotated anthologies of mystics in succeeding time periods beginning with fifth century in volume 1 continuing to the seventeenth century in the last volume. He continues to work on the next volume of the mystics in the eighteenth century but he says that his energy is more limited as he ages. The sheer volume of his series (each book contains only a snippet of the writings of each mystic) suggest that their experiences may be more common and experienced by many people today.

His 2006 book, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* is a sampler of his more in-depth series of eight books. [Bernard McGinn quotes](#) from the beginning of this book are slightly-edited to summarize his understanding of the common core of many different mystics.

[The mystical life] is essentially a ... journey to God, not just a brief state of what is often called mystical union, important as such moments may be. ... Mysticism can show how mystics have prepared for God's intervention in their lives and the effect that divine action has had upon the mystic and those to whom he or she has communicated the message.

God does not become present to human consciousness the way that an object in the concrete world is said to be present. Encountering God is much more like meeting a friend or loved one, and many Christian mystics have used intensely personal language in their writing, especially in their descriptions of their relation to Jesus.

Mystics puts us in touch with some of the most profound aspects of the human spirit. They invite us to imagine ourselves in a new light, to begin the inner exploration that leads to an inner transformation based on a new intimacy with God. They describe important aspects of human nature that may be helpful even to non-believers. Like great poets, the great mystics exemplify extraordinary human achievement who inspire even those from other, or no, religions .



References

Evelyn Underhill (1875- 1941) had profound personal spiritual experiences which prompted her to study the experiences of the mystics. She was a prolific Catholic author whose books describe the epic spiritual journey from a personal perspective; she also endeavored to create a context for making sense of spiritual experiences by integrating concepts from the then-new field of psychology; she also dismissed certain psychological perspectives, such as William James' *Varieties of Psychological Experiences*, as too theoretical to express the very personal nature of spiritual experiences.

She considered mystics to be spiritual pioneers who charted the personal and spiritual aspects of life; they brought "amazing tidings" from their spiritual explorations reminding you of your own possibilities for making your own "heroic response" to the invitation to explore your inner world. She preferred the word saints rather than mystics to remove any connotations suggesting a link with the magical and the occult.

She used the name "the hidden steersman" for the indwelling who guides you on your spiritual explorations, much as your Divine Companion is a wise inner guide.

Her books include the spiritual classics *Mysticism: A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* (1911) which emphasized the personal and practical aspects of spirituality and *Practical Mysticism: A Book for Normal People* (1914) which emphasized that everyone, not a select few, can follow the inner spiritual path. She also wrote books about spiritual trailblazers including *Ruysobeck* (1915) and collaborated with Rabindranath Tagore on a translation of the Indian mystic *Kabir* (1915).

Evelyn Underhill Quotes

"In mysticism that love of truth ... the beginning of all philosophy leaves the merely intellectual realm and takes on the assured aspect of personal passion. Where the philosopher guesses and argues, the mystic lives and looks; and speaks ... the disconcerting language of first-hand experience, not the neat dialectic of schools. Hence, while the Absolute of metaphysics remains a diagram – impersonal and unattainable – but the Absolute [the Divine Companion] of the mystics is lovable, attainable, alive." from *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*

References

More Evelyn Underhill Quotes

“Mysticism is the art of union with the Real.” {She often used the word Real to refer to the spiritual aspects of life and the Divine Companion of the inner world.]

Paraphrase: “Using only you intellectual capacities is stultifying; that way of life is like fatally trusting the squirrel-work of the brain without activating the piercing vision of the desirous heart. The work of the brain can be tantalizing without participating in the real process of engagement that pulls you in and involves you in the actual spiritual journey of drawing close to the divine indwelling. The ideas of the brain alone without real engagement are like a portrait of your beloved without the actual embrace of your beloved.”

Paraphrase: “You have three deep cravings that can only be satisfied spiritually. The first craving is to journey beyond the everyday world as a pilgrim searching for your lost-to-you true home, a better country, an Eldorado, a Sarras, a Heavenly Syon. The second craving is for heart-to-heart contact with the perfect partner for your Soul, the partner who makes you a better lover. The third craving is to create a pure and

perfect inner landscape, a worthy home for your Divine Companion.”

Paraphrase: “Practical mysticism is a training of your latent facilities, a bracing and brightening of your languid consciousness, an emancipation from the fetters of appearance, a turning of your attention to new more spiritual levels of the world.”

Slightly paraphrased: “As the beautiful does not exist for the artists and poet alone – though these can find in it more poignant depths of meaning than others might – so the beauty of the [divine] exists for you and everyone. Each of us can participate with the divine, cooperate with it, according to one’s measure and to the strength and purity of one’s desire.”

Paraphrase: “As the genuine spiritual impulse becomes dominant, adoration more and more becomes the main aspect of prayer. ‘I come to seek God because I need Him’ is increasingly supplanted by ‘I come to adore God’s splendor, his sublime character, and fling myself and all that I have at the feet of God.”

References

Marcus Borg (1942-2015) was a professor and New Testament scholar who considered himself a Progressive Christian. He had a knack for studying theological details and then describing God from a broad perspective that emphasized the main themes of religion over narrow dogmatic detail (website: marcusjborg.org lists resources about his work and hosts several discussion events). In his book, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*, he described five characteristics common to all religions of the world: 1) that the world holds Something More than the material aspects of life; 2) the importance of being compassionate to others; 3) the great value of having a spiritual practice or discipline; 4) holding a sacred perspective on life as described in a sacred text; and 5) having a community of members who share spiritual values in common.

Marcus Borg's other books include: *The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Religion to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith*; *Convictions: How I learned What Mattered Most*; *Days of Awe and Wonder: How to Be a Christian in the Twenty-first Century*.

Marcus Borg quotes

“Centering in God transforms us. It changes us. It produces what Paul calls ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ and the ‘gifts of the Spirit.’ It is what Jesus meant when he said, ‘You will now them by their fruits.’ The fruits of centering in God are many and intertwined, but the most important are compassion, freedom and courage, and gratitude.” [from his book *Convictions*]

“The spiritual journey, in Christianity as well as non-Christian forms, is about the hatching of the heart, the opening of the self to the reality of the Spirit. The opening begins the process by which the self at its deepest level is reoriented and transformed.” [from his book *Convictions*]

“The Christian life is not about [...] believing now or behaving now for the sake of heaven later. It is about entering a relationship in the present that begins to change everything now. Spirituality is about this process: the opening of the heart to the God who is already here.” [from his book *The God We Never Knew*]

References

Richard (Dick) Schwartz developed *Internal Family Systems* based on his experiences in the 1980's providing therapy to people with very serious psychological issues, including strong suicidal ideation. One client described having different parts within herself; these parts sustained her problems until they felt heard and respected by both her and Dick Schwartz. He then expanded this approach with other clients and found that when their internal parts became helpful, not harmful, after they felt that their concerns were heard and new plans were made for addressing their concerns. As he continued to successfully help many more clients, he formulated a view of the inner world as inhabited by parts (managers, firefighters and exiles) who are well-intentioned but use rigid and immature ways of dealing with issues. He also found that clients have another part, the Self, who is far more compassionate and capable than the other parts.

Richard describes IFS in his book *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model* and in many articles in the magazine *Psychotherapy Networker*. YouTube has many videos by Schwartz and senior IFS trainers. Richard Schwartz does not

consider himself religious, Christian or otherwise, but welcomes integration of IFS with spirituality. Some IFS trainers, such as Jenna Riemersha, Cory Bush, Julie Honeycutt and Molly LaCroix, are devout Christians who see great complementarity between their religious beliefs and their psychological perspectives. They blend scriptural references with IFS principles in some of their YouTube videos.

Mary Steege, a minister and therapist, wrote *The Spirit-Led Life: A Christian Encounter with Internal Family Systems* which integrates her training in theology with her training in IFS. She also describes her personal journey from finding that her old ways, that once seemed so perfect, no longer served her to feeling much more alive as she pulled all of her parts into a happier union. Her book includes several conversations with Richard Schwartz, founder of IFS, who appears to have enjoyed their collaboration.

Russell Harris, also a psychotherapist and minister, wrote *Christ-Centered Internal Family Systems*; his book may be appealing to people with an established Christian orientation.



References

The ideas attributed to Carl Jung in this book mainly come from Jungian scholars and psychotherapists.

Dennis Slattery is professor emeritus of Mythological Studies who taught graduate courses about the work of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. He has authored, co-authored or edited several books about the spiritual journey, including *Day-to-Day Dante: Exploring Personal Myth through the Divine Comedy*; *Riting Myth, Mythic Writing: Plotting your Personal Story*; and *Bridge Work: Essays on Mythology, Literature and Psychology*. He is also a poet and a painter.

Dennis Slattery gives talks and retreats; some address how a Jungian approach integrates mythic stories and psychology to enhance our view of ourselves and life. His website is dennispatrickslattery.com and provides links to several of his talks and interviews. He gave a talk in Wilmington, DE through the Community for Integrative Learning where he discussed the idea of life's call to each person to make a courageous decision to undertake their epic journey; the twin gods of remembering (Mnemosyne), and forgetting (Lemosyne); the *Divine Comedy* as a optimistic mythic story

(*comedio* that involves rising to meet challenging tasks but climaxes in a weddings or celebration) in contrast to a pessimistic mythic story (tragedy that also involves meeting difficulties but ends in death and betrayal).

Phillip Brownell, a Gestalt therapist, wrote a paper about integrating spirituality (which he defines as a relationship with a divine being as opposed to a mysterious impersonal force) with psychotherapy (a process for deepening awareness of our moment-to-moment experiences and enhancing our relationships). He begins with two central ideas: 1) that God is a person but is a divine person which is different from a human person and 2) that God is a person with whom you can dialogue and have a meaningful and essential relationship. Gestalt therapy emphasizes the importance of being aware of what is happening in this moment and feeling your experiences as fully as possible. Brownell recognizes that many psychologists don't include God in therapy but he also cites many other psychologists and philosophers who also integrate the divine and the human aspects of a person by including God in the scope of what you can experience in this moment.

References

The Choice is Always Ours: The Classic Anthology on the Spiritual Way is an anthology of the psychological thoughts of spiritual sages and the spiritual thoughts of psychologists first compiled by Dorothy Berkley Phillips with help from Elizabeth Boyden Howes and Lucille M Nixon on later editions (first edition was published in 1948). In addition to quoting authors familiar to readers today, the anthology also quotes thinkers who less well known today. The editors credit C. G. Jung, Fritz Kunkel and Henry Burton Sharman as major influences who shaped their philosophy.

Their book focuses on “the Way” of living that integrates both your psychological and spiritual processes and surrendering to a personal leading greater than yourself. The lesser ways of living are based in self-centered and often mean-spirited ego who wants to reign supreme. The Way involves taming one’s ego who intensely resists surrender to a higher entity because the ego views that as tantamount to total annihilation of the self. A common theme is that each person also has an inner urge to allow “that of God within a person” to transform the ego’s preoccupation with preservation of the small self.

The title comes from a poem by Aldous Huxley:

The choice is always ours. Then, let me choose
The longest art, the hardest Promethean way
Cherishingly to tend and feed and fan
That inward fire, that small precarious flame,
Kindled or quenched, creates
The noble or the ignoble person we are,
The worlds we live and the very fates,
Our bright or muddy star.

The anthology includes some interesting word usages. The editors refer to the world as “the outer shell” in contrast to the shell that is your person.

Frances de Sales used the word *worldling* to describe someone who is a child of this world, someone who is devoted to the pleasures and customs of the material world. His use of that word suggests the need for a word, such as *divineling*, to describe someone who is a child of God, someone who is devoted to seeking the beauty and goodness of the Spirit. Henry David Thoreau: “Humility, like darkness, reveals the heavenly lights.”

References

David Brooks is a political conservative who writes for the *New York Times* and a commentator for *PBS New Hour*. He addresses sociological issues affecting society, such as polarization based on identifying oneself and others by certain characteristics (education, race, gender). He has written several books about human nature including *The Social Animal: The Hidden Source of Love, Character, and Achievement*; *The Road to Character* and *The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life*.

Based on the book *Some Do Care* by Anne Colby and William Damon, he described (5/21/2018) two ways of responding to the demands of life: in a morally heroic way or in a more self-centered way. The heroic response is a whole-hearted commitment to a goal larger than personal self-interest characterized by a devotion to a high ideal, not material accomplishments. Such moral heroes so devoted to their ideals that they are quite unconcerned with personal risks and costs to themselves; they are optimists who double-down in their devotion to their ideal when they are thwarted; their goal is so beautiful to them that other worldly goals have little allure; they have little ego involvement and are resistant to burnout.

In another column, he used the term rippers and weavers to describe two radically different approaches to relationships. Rippers respond to disappointments in life by aligning themselves with one tribe and ripping apart members of other tribes whom they consider inferior; rippers enjoy a sense of community within their tribe but create distance and discord with people outside their tribe. Weavers respond to life by seeking to help others who they see as valuable because of their common shared humanity, regardless of whether they have a shared identity; weavers often create bridges that connect people who might otherwise be excluded.

The Foothills and Mountain metaphor in this book includes the element of personal spirituality that is not part of Brooks' original Two Mountain metaphor. His writing is mainly secular. He sometimes addresses the impact of organized religion (the beliefs of a group) on society but he doesn't address individual spirituality. His metaphor of two mountains is mainly about how the presence or absence of secular altruism makes a big difference in a person's actions and life direction. The use of the Foothills and Mountain metaphor is not intended to misrepresent Brooks' ideas.

References

Brene Brown is a sociologist whose initial research on shame led to her insights on the central importance of being connected with other people. This need for connection inherently creates vulnerability because you may be rejected, not connected, if you share your authentic self. This dilemma creates a core choice in your life. You can live a cautious life and try to avoid being vulnerable by squelching your authentic self; or you can choose to live a whole-hearted and engaged life knowing full well that you may be shamed by others if you speak your inner truth. The first approach to life and relationships is dominated by fear of being shunned by others; the second approach is dominated by the desire to experience the sweet nectar of solid and honest relationships, that siren call of the best experience in life: to know another and be known by another. Brene's writing is mainly secular but her interviews indicate that she finds religion personally important. Her ideas about braving vulnerability to forge meaningful connections with other people apply equally well to your inner relationship with your Divine Companion.

John Eldredge is a counselor and Christian author who writes about men's issues. One of his core themes is that your life is

like a story and you have a core choice between living from your smaller story or living a larger story that includes the your unique contribution that can only be done in cooperation with God. His books include *Wild at Heart* and *Fathered by God*. His website is wildatheart.org.

Dan Gottlieb is a respected Philadelphia psychologist (drdangottlieb.com). who hosted the show *Voices in the Family*, summaries his work as "I teach kindness." His latest book is *The Wisdom We're Born With: Restoring Our Faith in Ourselves*.

Note. All the authors in this reference section (not just this page) have been both recognized for their contributions and severely criticized for their thoughts. For example, Teresa of Avila was viewed with deep suspicion by the Catholic hierarchy during her life; four centuries after she died, she was declared a Doctor of the [Catholic] Church in recognition of her valuable spiritual insights. Their ideas aren't universally accepted. So you must evaluate their ideas for yourself. However, the common perspective that emerges from the overlap of their thinking provides some, not absolute, assurance that their ideas deserve your serious consideration.

References

James Allen (1864 – 1912) read widely in literature and religion who wrote books and a periodical, *The Light of Reason*. The central theme of his writing was the importance of spirituality in the psychological growth of a person. He also emphasized importance of finding personal truth through your own experiences; he considered books, including his own, as guides, not substitutes, for your own experiences and discoveries. He recommended meditation, time when His best known book was *As a Man Thinketh*; a quote from that book: “You cannot travel within and stand still without.” *The Divine Companion*, his last book, was published posthumously. His books are available free online (in English and Dutch) from the James Allen Free Library at james-allen.in1woord.nl (woord is not a typo; it has two o’s).

The Urantia Book describes similar concepts about the inner landscape using different vocabulary. This challenging book may be most fruitful if read with a focus on the relationship between God and an individual person rather than focusing on purely intellectual ideas about the universe. Downloadable versions are available online through urantia.org.

The **Baha’i religion** integrates the various religious traditions, including Eastern and Abrahamic religions. They use a metaphor of a mountain for the spiritual landscape that can be ascended by many different spiritual paths which all converge on the same peak of the God sought by all religions.

Martin Buber (1878 – 1965) was raised by his grandfather, a Midrash scholar, after his parents divorced when he was three years old. He published mystical texts from both Jewish and other sources. He was a professor of philosophy first in Germany and then Israel but he felt he was more accurately someone who was interested in personal experiences and the personal relationship with God rather than abstract ideas about life and God. His most well-known book *I and Thou* is a dense but fruitful read.

Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907 – 1972), descendant of European rabbis, was a professor whose religious beliefs inspired his social activism. His books, which make Jewish wisdom accessible to a general audience, include *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*; *Man Is not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion*. Youtube has interviews and lectures about him.