

MY TACTICS - MIND ENCLOSURE

Thoughts are the conversations that we are having with ourselves.

My mind enclosure is the centre of my reality where everything makes sense or nonsense.

There are many sides of me and I constantly have conversations with myself that are often intriguing and enlightening. These personalities within me make up who I am and there appears to be an aspect that I was born with (nature) and an aspect that I acquired over a period of time (nurture). The dominant traits show up on a regular basis defining who I am and while the others reside in background.

I have spent a lot of time wondering about who I am, I have come to realize that I am like a group of individuals (or residents as I call them) residing within this that dwelling I refer to as myself. These residents have developed rules or patterns of communication that are either functional (when it helps me get the results that I want) or dysfunctional (when it does the opposite).

I found that I was able to clearly identify these individual (about 7 of them) residents of my mind enclosure (ME) that I now refer to as my house. What I observe as my thoughts or me talking to myself, could now be more accurately described as me observing these residents (that are me) discussing their different points of view, from the perspective of the personalities that they are.

It is fascinating how I can describe each one of them by the feelings that they generate and convey. I am not describing a multiple personality scenario where the dominant personality could constantly change and the individual describes a dissociative state. Within my house the individual personalities are always present and interacting, each one offering opinions but there is a dominant personality that takes all these points of view into consideration and then speaks for everyone and so speaks for the house..

I liked the idea of the house because it fit comfortably with my Yoruba cultural background. I was always told that a house divided could not stand and I realized the importance of peace and harmony. In the Yoruba culture peace and harmony meant people getting along well even if they did not really like each other.

There are individuals that reside in my house that I don't care very much for but it is important to realize that they are in fact me and have a right to be there even though it is best that they do not speak for the house, their opinions are still important and need to be heard. In that manner when I find myself confronted with a somewhat "shady" situation I depend heavily on the opinions of "conniving Toye" (who can be very destructive if let loose and allowed to speak for the house) and luckily these opinions are then expressed by "responsible Toye" who speaks for the house.

It is important to point out that there is nothing scientific about this it is simply a process I created to understand myself better and learn how to resolve conflicts within myself. There are times when these parts of these residents would merge to form a new resident who is a combination of the personalities that merged in the same manner that red, yellow and blue are primary colours and mixing yellow and blue produce green.

My house has developed over time and the hierarchy of the residents has occurred through my reinforced experiences over the years. "Little Toye (the child in me)" does not talk very much but his presence can always be felt at every meeting.

I have spent many hours speculating on why I am who I am and if I was born with all these traits? Do I develop new traits or simply reinforce the ones I have? In other words can I adopt new residents and evict the ones that I don't like? I now believe that that once a resident exists within the house it is impossible to evict them and the focus should be on how best to manage the house so there is peace and harmony.

There are residents within my house that I am not particularly proud of and some that are downright embarrassing in the same manner there are residents that I think are okay but people around me seem unable to stand. There is always a dominant personality that speaks for my house and this is the one that people around me recognize as myself. This dominant resident or leader happens through reinforcement of the attributes associated with this particular individual within me.

I do have a say on who speaks for the house (the dominant personality or leader). This leader is determined through reinforcement of that trait so for example when I suffered from panic attacks and generalized anxiety disorder “fearful Toye” spoke for the house and although he still resides within me, through reinforcing the traits that I wanted, he no longer speaks for the house and “confident Toye” is the dominant leader.

What I realized was focusing on a trait I did not want was a form of reinforcement even though my intent was to make it less dominant the focus actually reinforced it and so I was inadvertently voting for it, so now I simply focus on the trait I want to reinforce and ignore the one that I don't.

Through careful observation I have gained a better understanding of my house rules.

- 1) Every resident has a place and has a right to be respected. It is important to accept them as they are (self-acceptance) while still choosing appropriate action that is likely to provide the results that I want.
- 2) Every resident will be heard (self-awareness). This means that I will be aware of all the residents in the house irrespective of how I feel about them. Denial and avoidance of self may provide short-term relief but do not give me the long-term stability of self-love that I crave. I believe that self-awareness and self-acceptance equals self-love.
- 3) I recognize the residents by the feelings they generate and these feelings in turn influence my actions.
- 4) The dominant resident/residents in the house is/are the one/ones

whose attributes I have most often repeated through expressions or attempts at suppression i.e. the one in whom most of my time and efforts are invested becomes the leader.

5) The dominant resident/residents speaks for the house and therefore interacts with my external environment and are most recognizable as who I am.

Points to remember:

Thoughts are the conversations that you are having with yourself.

How you have these conversations is important.

Recognizing and being accepting of the different parts of you (the residents in your mind enclosure) is important.