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## The Nature of the Mind

by Adrian Newington © 1991

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**A discussion on the Human Mind to assist both beginners and those more experienced in the practice of Meditation.**

Let us start out this dissertation with 3 statements.

- Human consciousness has 2 fundamental aspects, which we shall discuss as the Small Self and the True Self.
- The small self is the personal identification that the majority of people possess in determining who they are.
- The true self is the lesser known in terms of our human perspective on life, but it actually the source of our being.

To assist in the understanding of these 3 statements, I will draw on some analogies.

### **The small self is the self that is Observed.**

That is, I am Adrian  
I am Adrian the Husband  
I am Adrian the Dad  
I am Adrian the Musician  
I am Adrian the Technician  
I am Adrian the Associate of other Technicians  
I am Adrian the Project Manager

On and on the list goes on and on.  
All these labels and qualifications heaped onto the small self to further expand the separation of the 2 Selves.

### **The true self is the self that Observes.**

That is, the Self which is always apart from the small self and is the silent witness to all of the above.

These descriptions of the true and small selves can be more easily understood through a simple mental experiment based on some principles of meditation. It does not require any previous meditation experience.

Sit comfortably, relax and settle in.  
Start with the intention of stilling the Mind  
Inevitably you will experience thoughts come into your mind.  
This is OK.

Simply maintain the awareness that you are not to engage, expand upon, or be drawn into following through any thought. Once you are able to do this, still the mind again. Watch any thought that arises, but let them subside and drift away... don't be lured out of the task WITNESSING your thoughts.

Keep engaged in the process of being a witness to the activity of the Mind until you begin to notice that your thoughts can indeed be observed.

Once you have had the genuine experience of your thoughts being witnessed or observed, we can end the experiment and continue the discussion.

And now for the Killer question...

**Question:** If it is possible to observe your thoughts, what is it that does the observing?

**Answer:** The True Self.

How can this be explained further?

Consider this: Your eyes, which are the means to vision, can never have a vision of themselves. If your eye is to have a vision of itself, it needs to look in a mirror.

Likewise if consciousness is to become self-aware, it needs a mirror... such a mirror is your Mind. Be aware that the "Mind" does not represent YOU... the Mind is merely an instrument of Perception. The identity of YOU being a unique aspect of creation holds its roots in the True Self.

Note: Defining consciousness does not imply self-awareness or the ability to perform mathematics or wonder "what shall I do today?". We could say that a dog has consciousness (to a degree),... a microbe has consciousness (to a degree),... a tree has consciousness (to a degree), in that they are all able to have a degree of interaction with their environment. There is an awareness of local external conditions.

But self-aware consciousness is easily lured into the false reality that the reflection it sees of itself through the mirror-action of the Mind is the real thing. This is the experience of us all as we live out our everyday life. Even experienced meditators and other adepts of the study of consciousness (yoga), are still bound by some degree to the illusion that the small self is the real thing, but this does not imply that benefit and positive change are unattainable. Obviously, the Mind has proven itself to be enormously valuable in man's quest for the search for truth ranging from scientific and philosophical pursuits, our everyday endeavours, ambitions and dreams, and the exploration of consciousness with a view of knowing our true self.

To live fully and completely in the realms of the True Self, is to have attained a very very advanced state of spiritual attainment. This is known by various terms such as Samadhi, Nirvana, Full Enlightenment, Self-Realisation, Merging, Liberation to name a few.... But we do not necessarily have to attain such a perfected or elevated state to bring powerful transformation into our lives. (Note: in the states described above, one does not LOSE one's Mind, but rather the Mind, (the instrument of perception) merges with the True or Observing Self so that the illusion of these entities being separate comes to an end). Just as the space inside a jar merges with the space outside the jar when the jar is broken. The breaking of the jar represents the end to the sense which cultivates duality or separation...that is, the illusion that there is a separate small self and true self.

Keep in mind that when we talk about the analogy of the 'mirroring-action' of the Mind, this Mind-Mirror is not to be considered bright and shining and as clear and accurate as our bathroom mirror. This is because this 'Mind-Mirror' has been formed through and by every life experience we've had since the day we were born. As such, there are natural biases and distortions affecting our view of life and ourselves.

Consider the 'funny-mirrors' at the local 'fun park'. Through the mirror's gross imperfections and distortions, the funny image we see is far from an accurate representation of truth. Such a mirror can also be biased by its color. If the mirror had a red coloring, we will not see an accurate reflection of something green. However, if we were wearing something Red, that would be accurately portrayed. All other colors through the same mirror would be infiltrated with the bias of the mirror's coloring.

When you look at yourself in the bathroom mirror in the morning, you do not say... "Hey! Who are you?", as if 2 identities exist, but consciousness is much more subtle and there is difficulty in realising that the projected image of self out of the Mind is only a reflection.

The image we see in the bathroom mirror will not take on a life of its own, but the Mind-Image (small self), IS composed of consciousness, and will therefore take on living attributes as it accumulates identities brought about by participation in life.

By possessing the knowledge of the True Self is to possess a lamp. Having such a lamp will illuminate the path before you to bring you guaranteed change into your life. If the path is walked with resolute intent, profound changes can be assured. But let us now continue.

Through Meditation, we aim to dwell in the regions of the True Self. (even briefly gives a tremendous benefit). This gives us the experience we lack through participating in life from the viewpoint of the small self.... That is, by the continual identification that we are the Reflection that is seen in the mirror of the Mind.

The small self is where all our emotions, anxieties, dreams of finding fulfilment, hopes and fears all reside. Language and other forms of worldly expression also emanate through the Mind.... Which begs a question: If language emanates THROUGH the Mind, where is its source?

All language, all verbal communication originates as a concept. Such concepts are whole and complete, and are instantly understood by the individual. For example, This entire discourse is understood by me without the need for language, but I employ the Mind for the purpose of getting my message across to you. The original concept or idea was sourced from my True self, but I am employing the abilities of the Mind to exchange to you, the concept that LIVES within me.

You too have had many such experiences along these lines. Have you ever struggled to convey an idea to someone, but kept on getting stuck for words? You knew in your self EXACTLY what was within, but the difficulty was the EXPRESSION of your idea. The original idea or concept came from the true self. It is the small self empowered through the mind, which delivers the idea for external communication.

All creativity, inventiveness, unconditional love, sense of righteousness, self-fulfilment, fearlessness, all comes forth out of the abode of the True Self. Fear, which is born out of that which is not known, illusion, and the need for survival and protection of the physical body, are all products of the small self.

The true self is inherently peaceful, confident and always fulfilled. This is your link with the Divine.

By regularly going to the region of the true self through the basic techniques of meditation, we are able to remove ourselves from all the dramas, anxieties and concerns of the Mind's world. Even 5 minutes a day is good as it gives us the experience of true rest. This 'true rest' is obtained at a mental level, for when the mind is at rest, the body can also follow very easily and obtain benefit.

These analogies of the Mind-Mirror and its inherent biases and distortions, are not meant to de-value or claim that all things viewed through this instrument of perception are unreliable. Analogies are only meant to serve as building blocks or stepping stones for positive progress.

So now when you meditate, cultivate the awareness of staying in the silent realm of the True Self. This is that part of you that watches ALL THINGS in perfect peace. Know also that...

The Mind is the source of emotions.  
The True Self is never affected by the emotions.  
The Mind co-ordinates worldly expression.  
The True Self communicates in wordless silence.  
The Mind is a repository of acquired knowledge.  
The True Self is your source of wisdom.  
The Mind is the source of passion.  
The True Self is your source of Love.  
The Mind perpetually hungers.  
The True Self is self fulfilled.  
The Mind will always struggle as it thinks that it is "itself" that does the meditating.  
The True Self is Always Meditating.

*Be Peaceful,*  
**Adrian**