

# Episode 47: Knowing & Becoming Your True Self

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**[00:02:48]**

Good morning and welcome to Connexions Classroom Podcast. Today is Valentine's day, February 14th, 2015. So excited that you're here with me this morning. I want to talk today about the ability to know oneself—how do you start knowing yourself?

One of the fastest ways to start getting to know yourself is to become curious about you. Or if you were to think about *how do I get to know somebody else?* You're going to go to that person and start asking them questions, like, *where are you from? Who's your family? How do you get along with your parents? Tell me what you like, what you dislike. What are your hobbies?* You're going to get curious about them. That's what I want you to start learning to do with oneself, is to become curious about you.

So with every question that you ask yourself, information will come—internal information. And

sometimes when you start learning about yourself, sometimes it's kind of intimidating or frightening because you may ask yourself a question like, *why do I feel that way?* And all of a sudden, you hear *because you're selfish*. Or you hear, *because you're afraid*. Or you feel *intimidated by that person*, and you get those kinds of answers and you think *oh my goodness, am I ready for that kind of Truth about me, that kind of information about myself?*

I hope that you are. I mean, if you're listening to a series like this, that tells me that you're ready to be able to ask those kinds of questions about yourself.

When you get that kind of information that's really uncomfortable, don't be too quick or impulsive to make conclusions or to be judgmental about what you're learning about yourself. Or don't judge and be quick to point things out around somebody else. This is really wise feedback, not only regarding not reacting to what you're learning about yourself, but also about not reacting to other people. When we start getting knee-jerk with people, we start impulsing with ourselves, it can set us up to start perceiving things that are actually not accurate.

So, when we react or think we **know** what people mean when they describe themselves, their feelings, their experiences, their thoughts, their intentions, their motives, and we think we **know**, we will oftentimes be inaccurate. And we will every time be making up what *we think* they mean. Not exactly what *they* mean.

Here's what happens, is that somebody says, "I'm from New Jersey." And let's say in your history you have met from friends from two or three years ago who are from New Jersey and they broke into your house, so you aren't too fond of people from New Jersey. That's a huge judgement on your part, but because shame is so prevalent in our lives, we will make those kinds of sweeping generalizations and feel very justified in doing so. So these people say they're from New Jersey and all of a sudden you are sizing them up because of your own story that you told yourself about New Jersey and people from New Jersey. And so, you've got to make sure that you're actually listening to what *they* mean and not what you *think* they mean.

This is very, very necessary in order to be able to stay open and curious and continue to ask questions until you **know** what they mean. And again, not what you *think* they mean.

You will always, if you start making judgments or start being impulsive and telling yourself a story, you will never get to know them, and you will tell yourself a particular storyline that is inaccurate, but your shame will tell you that you're right.

Remember, shame is about distortion, and so it's really important that you stay open, you stay curious, and you ask questions about what **they** mean about themselves, not what **you** mean.

The way you will know if you have accurate information about yourself or another person is that you or the other person will feel heard, understood, validated, seen, you'll feel compassion

coming from the other person or towards oneself. If either you or they are feeling reactionary, or blamed, or misunderstood, or not heard, or validated, I guarantee you that you have begun to make up stories and you have not listened or heard them, but you have put your own meaning onto their thoughts, their feelings, their behaviors, their perceptions, etc. And you're not even interested really in them; only in what you *think* that they mean. And if you choose to do that, you will never be able to know yourself or someone else if you're going to choose to respond in that manner.

So, knowing oneself or knowing someone else is all about being curious about you, or being curious about them. And when you're curious about yourself you'll ask questions like, *How do you feel? Why did I do that? What do I believe? What is the emotional Truth? What is it that I need? Am I living in my integrity? What do I think about such-and-such? How will I respond? Will I choose to be humble, and willing, and open, and transparent? Was that an honest choice? Did I do something that violated my integrity? Did I do something that I would consider inappropriate? Why am I fearful or scared? What am I perceiving? What am I responsible for in this situation? What do I value? What do I need to do to clean up my life or to repent in my life? What do I need to do to make things emotionally honest? How do I need to be responsible? Am I in shame? Am I in some kind of distortion? Am I in denial? Asking myself those questions. Am I validating? Am I willing to be vulnerable?*

These are just a handful of questions that will help you become familiar with yourself if you're willing to 1) ask yourself those questions, and 2) sit and listen to the answers that you as a being give yourself.

Or again, this goes towards another person as well, you can ask other people those questions so you can learn about them.

As you become more acquainted with yourself, you have a responsibility then to share you with others. Why would sharing yourself with those you interact with be important?

It's important because you are the only one who is accountable for you and therefore you are responsible to share yourself, your *accurate* self with others—the real meaning of you with others—and not have them interpret what you mean or who you are. That interpretation will more times than not be lacking in accuracy of who you are. So as you continue through your years and you have more and more opportunities to learn of yourself, then your life experience is there to teach you to become aware or curious about—in these experiences—what do I think and how do I feel, and how do I interpret? What am I willing to do, what am I not willing to do? If you'll continue to ask those kinds of questions you'll be able—if you're open to hear the answers—to really understand yourself.

Let me put a note here. It is very important to not be dishonest about oneself, to not present oneself in a light or a position that is not accurate. Another way to language this is, don't cry

wolf about oneself because those you are in relationships will not know who you truly are or what you honestly, feel, think, and believe. In order to be honest in this way is it necessary to 1) **ask yourself** and **discover** what you value, what you think, what you believe, what you feel; and 2) **express** what you value, what you think, you believe, you feel, so that you and others can know you accurately. When I say accurate, that means with precision—as closely as possible. This is the only way to connect and form bonds of intimacy with yourself and another person.

So as I become aware of myself and I mature and I grow and I understand what I think, and feel, and see, and do the things I do, I'm going to feel more connected to myself, so I won't just be moving around the planet and not knowing myself but I'll understand and I'll appreciate why I do the things I do.

*Knowing* yourself translates into *being* and *becoming* you. It's almost like you have an opportunity to go back and remember who you really are, and then start **being** who you really are. That is really what I'm wanting to be and become, is myself. It's like becoming, through a process of opportunities to see and learn of oneself, reuniting and remembering who I have always been yet I have possibly forgotten. It's a reunification of self. It's a powerful process to come back—and that's what it feels like—to come back to oneself.

Let's talk for a minute about once you **know** yourself, then you get to **be** yourself. But in order to really be you, you have to know you. There's a directive from God that says *know thyself*. We're also directed to *love thyself*. So, as I become myself by asking myself those kinds of questions, I engage a process of personal awareness and consciousness through this curiosity that I start engaging. As I learn about myself, I begin to share with others about myself. I share what I learn as I live day to day, moment after moment and stay curious, aware, and conscious. I move through a process of learning, then knowing myself, and then being myself.

That's the process. I have to first **know** who I am (and that's where I ask those questions), to **become** who I am. So being myself means I share who I am, I continue to learn about myself, I give compassion towards myself and others, I continue to choose to live in integrity, I live with a mentality of openness, and giving, and understanding, empathy, vulnerability, boundaries for myself and others, validation, curiosity; I risk, I'm accountable, I'm honest, I'm long-suffering, I have humility directed towards myself and simultaneously towards others.

Each of these characteristics has a certain meaning so let's just go through some of them.

**Openness**, which means I am transparent and available. I desire share myself with others and I desire for others to share themselves with me. I do not keep secrets. I do not fear what others might think of me. I am comfortable in my own skin to the point that I'm willing to share everything about me as long as it's safe with the other person—as long as the other person is safe.

How do I **give**? That's one of the characteristics of being yourself. Well, giving looks like this: I'm generous and open emotionally and spiritually. I'm willing to give my time, my effort, my love, my concern towards myself and to others. My attitude is one of supporting and giving, yet I give only what I am honestly able to give. I do not give because I *should* or *I'm going to get stuff*, or *I'm afraid that if I don't I'll be in trouble*. I give genuinely because I desire to lift, inspire and encourage other people.

Let's talk about **understanding**. Understanding is one of these characteristics. When I'm understanding, I'm spiritually, mentally, and emotionally aware and awake to what is going on inside myself, and I get curious about what's going on with others. I recognize why I and others behave the way that we do, rather than simply becoming judgmental—like making up a story like I talked about before, about behaviors.

So I feel **empathy**. Empathy is, in addition to understanding myself and others, I feel deeply the emotional experiences of another. I put myself in their shoes, I look for opportunities to emotionally understand and connect with myself and others. When I empathize, I get vulnerable and I validate. And I might even have to risk when I start empathizing, because I have to be willing to join them emotionally, which means that could be an extremely vulnerable and risky situation.

I have **boundaries**. I know what I value and I believe, and I honor (I live according to) my beliefs. I do not allow my own or others' wants to alter my behavior such that I violate my commitments or my core beliefs. I hold boundaries. Holding boundaries is vital to being myself. That's an absolute necessity to be able to hold boundaries in order to stay connected to self.

**Validation**. Validation means as I live in empathy, I naturally seek opportunities to tell and show others and myself that I see them, I understand them, I value them, I appreciate them. I might even feel similar feelings to them. It's basically saying, "I see you and you're important to me." That's what validation means.

**Vulnerability**. I am willing to show and share my weaknesses, my imperfections, my vulnerable spots when it's emotionally safe to do so.

**Curiosity**. I am interested in discovering and learning about myself and others. I ask questions of myself about my motives, my intentions, my needs, wants, desires, expectations. And as I learn about myself, I also become interested in learning about others.

**Characteristics of risk**. Risk means I seek to establish and deepen relationships by being vulnerable within myself and with others. And then, observing the outcomes of my choices to be vulnerable. That's the risk: I observe the outcomes of my choices to be vulnerable. I say to myself *is it safe to risk here? Should I choose to risk here?*

**Accountability.** I own my choices and their outcomes. I do not blame others for uncomfortable outcomes and I choose conscious and aware choices. That's what being accountable and being culpable means.

The characteristic of **honesty.** Honesty means what I think and what I say are congruent with what I do. I express my emotions, my boundaries, my expectations. I assert myself and do not apologize when I have not done anything to apologize for. I'm honest.

One of the last characteristics is **humility** which means I am willing to see myself in the Truth. The Truth. I take feedback from others and change my thinking and behaviors. So, I'm willing to change my thinking and behaviors if it doesn't match up with Truth. I am willing to repent or forgive, to keep commitments, and be *uncomfortable*: emotionally uncomfortable, physically uncomfortable. Any type of life experience that creates discomfort, if I'm in humility, I will be willing to experience that.

So being oneself means that I advocate for myself. I have an obligation, as I learn about how I view the world, to share it with others. As I share, I do so respectfully. I share information about myself or how I see, or what I feel about a particular topic or issue because 1) it's relevant to the conversation, or 2) I feel strongly about that topic and issue, and therefore I share how I think, and feel, and perceive it without disrespecting the other person. Or 3) when the issue or situation is directly impacting or affecting me, and it's done with the intention of not harming another. Or 4) I share information when I'm in an intimate setting and it's for the purpose of deepening the relationship. Or 5) I share to show empathy towards others.

Those things, there's five of them: 1) I share because I want to share how I think and feel, 2) I share because it's directly impacting me, 3) I share because it's relevant to the conversation, 4) I share when I'm in an intimate setting and I want to deepen the relationship, and 5) I share to show empathy.

All of these outcomes of sharing myself are edifying and reinforcing of loving myself, yet when you are being yourself, you never use your knowledge of either what you know of self or what you know of another to intentionally hurt or harm them. Being yourself is an elevated form of living and with it comes incredible personal responsibility, respect, honesty, and compassion towards yourself and the human family.

With the ability to love oneself—again you have to first know yourself in order to love yourself—truly love yourself. What you might share might hurt another being, and so it's really focused on what is your intention; why are you sharing what you're sharing? And so, though you're not responsible to not hurt another human being—they get to choose how they're doing to respond to that—you do get to be gentle and conscious of why you're sharing what you're sharing.

Living in this kind of conscientiousness, this awake position, means I don't get to be mean-

spirited, I don't get to be dishonest, or irresponsible, I don't get to be greedy, or victim oriented, or blame, or be judgemental, or shame another person, or hold resentments. I have too much awareness to live in a darker space where those characteristics reside. Though because I'm human, I might slip into those kinds of behaviors, yet I will need to shift out of them very quickly if I'm going to choose and claim to be conscious—if I'm going to claim to be awake, and aware, and curious, which equates to love that is unconditional towards self and others.

So basically, what I want you to understand is that if I'm going to say that I am loving myself because I am *being* myself, then I don't get to be dishonest, I don't get to take from another person, I don't get to blame, I have no permission to be greedy or hold resentments because if I'm going to live like that, I have to be conscious, I have too much awareness to be living that way.

### **[00:24:20] Affirmations**

One of the ways that learning to know yourself and then moving into being oneself and keeping it there, not keeping it 24/7 but staying there as often as possible, is being able to have some affirmations. Let me talk just a minute about the power of affirmations. Affirmations are short, direct statements of Truth about yourself which you consciously choose to tell yourself throughout each day. The purpose of affirmations is to challenge and change your specific faulty core beliefs and shame messages. Just as you have come to believe your shame through their constant repetition in your mind, so can you also believe the Truth about yourself by repeating specific Truths in response to your shame messages. So affirmations are statements of Truth about you and about your world.

When you are learning about yourself like learning to know yourself and becoming aware of who you are, you can repeat affirmations that are very powerful to your soul. And they can even heal you if you'll choose to believe them and practice them through efforts of:

1. Changing your shame messages back into reality and Truth.
2. Reframing your thoughts into thinking that it self affirmative, bold, and courageous.
3. Being willing to change your feelings and recognize that emotions follow thoughts, and thoughts can be changed if you're willing to change your thinking.

Affirmations will remind you of who you are and what you truly stand for and believe.

Affirmations typically have powerful and particular characteristics associated with them. If you want to make affirmations, they need to have these kinds of characteristics. Here are some suggestions of the characteristics:

1. Your affirmations need to be statements that are brief, specific, and positive. For example, *I am a powerful being. I am lovable. I am kind. I'm full of compassion and honesty.*

2. Affirmations are statements that reflect the accurate Truth about you and don't reinforce shame messages. Any of those statements that I just shared with you could be statements that reflect the accurate Truth, like you could say, *I am a smart person*. Or if you want to get more specific you could say: *I'm smart in English*. Or *I have an analytical brain*.
3. Keep the statements in the first person, like *I am lovable, I am divine, I am a hard worker*.
4. This is optional. You can make statements sensitive to time and/or location. Like, *today I will go to work and be happy*. That's about time and location.

Affirmations are ways to help you stay connected to yourself. They're very, very powerful. I want to share, just as we get ready to wrap this podcast this morning, some self-care strategies. Learning to care for self means learning how to love self. This podcast has been talking about the importance of knowing yourself and then as you know yourself, then you start becoming who you really are.

What is a self-care strategy? How can self-care support you to stay connected to being you?

Self-care is the act of caring for oneself, including your body and your soul. A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a particular result. A self-care strategy, then, is a specific, intentional, conscious plan to engage in a thought or activity that nurtures your soul as well as your body.

Why would we use these? Here's one answer. The reason for using self-care strategies is to address your shame or to confront your shame. Shame is slippery, and it's devious, and it affects everyone's ability to think rationally and clearly. So as a result, each of us needs to have predefined strategies which we decide upon while we're thinking and perceiving ourselves in the Truth. We then will use those strategies when we're in shame and distortion in order to return back to the Truth about ourselves. When dealing with something as elusive and treacherous as shame, we must be strategic and consistent.

These strategies have the power to change your life. Because you've been dictated to by shame throughout the years and perhaps throughout most of your lifetime...there's an old adage I'm thinking about, it says *if we do what we've always done, we'll get what we've always got*. This podcast is an invitation for you to change what you've always done and thus realize new and extraordinarily different outcomes.

Here are a couple of self-care strategies.

1. Practice being impeccably honest with yourself and others, including emotionally. Be emotionally honest with yourself and others.
2. Be willing to be personally responsible for your choices and the outcomes that follow.

3. Know and become familiar with your feelings, your wants, your thoughts, your beliefs, your moral, your values, your desires. And learn how to share those with other people. Learn how to tell people about who you are. Why is that self care? Because what you're saying is *I know me and this is who I am, and I want to share me with you because I care about me and I care about you.* And when we share ourselves with other people in that way where it's vulnerable and it's honest, it's protective, it feels loving, I feel connected and bonded.
4. Recognize when you're upset. Recognize when you're stressed, or sad, or lonely, or bored, or fearful, or any other feeling that's uncomfortable. Feel those feelings and find someone to validate them. Don't shove them away and act as though they don't matter or they shouldn't bother you, because they do.
5. Learn how to forgive—forgive yourself and forgive other people. We oftentimes are told to forgive others but so often we forget to forgive ourselves, so make sure that you include you in that list of people that you need to forgive.
6. Be willing to let go of expectations and resentments.
7. Know what you can change and accept what you can't change. That might be a little bit tricky. What you can change is yourself. That's it. And you have to accept what you can't change, which is everything and everyone else.
8. Create and hold appropriate boundaries for yourself. Boundaries are there to protect you. That's what they're there for.

As you're listening to these self care strategies, there are podcasts on every single one of these. There are podcasts on boundaries, there are podcasts on how to forgive yourself. There's a podcast on how to be emotionally honest and responsible for you. So go back and listen to the other podcasts because they will go into detail about how to live in this manner.

9. Learn how to communicate clearly and directly and share your feelings. Be responsible for what you feel—don't expect others to fix, or heal, or do for you.
10. Make affirmations and repeat them daily.
11. Exercise. Get your body moving. Move around. Get your heart rate up. If you can't do that then do some stretches or do some yoga, get your body so that it's having some kind of movement so it stays active.
12. Sleep appropriate amounts of time.
13. Eat nutritious meals.
14. Know the definition of BHLAST. Which stands for bored, hungry, lonely, angry, stressed, and tired. Check in with yourself several times a day and know how you feel and what you need. Know if you're bored, know if you're hungry, know if you're overly

angry or stressed, know if you're tired. Check in with yourself and understand *where am I?*

15. Be in the moment. Stay in the present. Pay attention to *am I thinking about what happened a minute ago? Am I thinking about what happened yesterday? Am I back when I was six and I just fell off my bike and I'm feeling scared or judged by my brother because he's laughing at me?* Where are you? Because the Truth is, you can only be here in this moment. You can't be in the future. You can't be in the past. Those are just thoughts you're having. Be in the moment, stay present.
16. Make a plan or structure that you follow each day. Organize your time, plan out your time. Do two things each day that feel nurturing to you in areas of being physical, spiritual, and personal.
17. This is a biggie, ready for this? Learn to not take things personal. If there's one strategy that I would say is the most important out of this whole list, it is number 17, which is **do not take things personal**. That means learn to stay out of shame. Because nothing in this life is personal to you. It's just not.
18. Advocate for oneself appropriately.
19. Ask for help when you need it. It takes humility to ask for help.
20. Acknowledge when you've done something that you deem violates your own moral code, your ethical code, your spiritual code, and then be willing to repent and make right what you did that was wrong. Make restitution.
21. Don't say sorry if you've not done anything wrong. That's not true for everyone, some people never say sorry, but some people say it a lot and they're saying it when they have not done anything that has been wrong. And so, notice when you say sorry and what it means. Make sure that it's accurate, like you're really saying it to be congruent with something that you've done that's been in error or has inadvertently or maybe advertently harmed someone.

I hope that you've enjoyed this. This has been a podcast that's talking about how to know yourself and thus become yourself. It's kind of like reuniting with yourself. For some of us, we don't spend very much time knowing ourselves, and therefore there's no way to actually understand oneself, and so therefore not being able to be oneself. And so, start off by asking yourself questions, *who am I? What do I want? What do I think? What do I desire? How come I'm feeling this way? Why am I scared? How come I feel lonely?* I mean, constantly stay in a dialogue with yourself, being curious about yourself, and you will begin to start understanding who you are and what you really think, and feel, and what you stand for. And that will quite

naturally transition into *becoming* you. And as you're doing that, you need to care for self, you need to live these kinds of strategies.

I just mentioned 20-plus strategies, but there are hundreds and hundreds of strategies to take care of oneself. So whatever works for you to nurture and nourish yourself, engage in those activities or continue to engage in those activities, so that you can stay connected and bonded to you as the soul.

I'm going to sign off. Take care of yourself. Stay connected until we talk again next Saturday. Bye bye.

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