

## **COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF ONE'S IDENTITY**

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Growing up, I only saw my mom as a mom, a figure that gave birth to me with my father. I expected my mom to care for me, look after me, and treat me correctly. However, when my mom fell short of those expectations, either by picking me up late or missing an important event for me, I felt misunderstood, angry, or upset. In this simple example, you can witness three things at play: relationships, perception, and expectations. All three become essential to understand the idea of compartmentalization of one's personality, and it is a connection to the development of relationships throughout life.

### **Relationships, Perception, and Expectations**

#### **Relationships**

Relationships, platonic or intimate, require communication and dialogue between two or more people. On the contrary, however, the idea of communication is a funny thing. Humans communicate with each other to gain an understanding of one individual with whom they have relations. Do they delve into a more substantial, more in-depth conversation to learn who this person is eventually? What makes them act the way that they do? How did they get to this point of being even able to talk to me, at this moment? These perplexing questions lead to further development by seeing what type of music the person likes, what kind of food they eat, and what they want to do when they have free time. The development of the individual can compare to world building in the context of books and TV shows like the Hunger Games and Avatar: The Last Airbender. Though you are learning a vast amount of information surrounding the individual, one only looks at the individual through the "friend" lens. This is opposed to the other things that individual may be in the world, that you do not see.

## **Perception**

*“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.”*

*~William Shakespeare*

Only witnessing an individual based upon how they interact with you is akin to looking at the earth and not seeing the whole universe. Grasping this small sliver of an individual is not your fault since the person only offers this little window to you, automatically. Similar to what Mr. Shakespeare said in the quote above, people are beautiful, flawless actors switching between different roles for different people daily. For example, I interact with my family in a goofy way. I will be joking around and pseudo-serious the whole time, and that is my role around them, but around my college professors I am not like that. Around my college professors, I am serious, and on top of all my decisions. If the family Christian were to trade places with the academic Christian, there would be some similarities, but there would be a significant number of differences. Meaning, in a sense, my different roles could be perceived as different people. Moreover, people’s different parts showcased as two different people is not unique to me. It is a phenomenon expressed throughout humanity.

## **Complexity and Obscurity within Perception**

Embracing then one piece of an individual, who is multifaceted and constructed of thousands of parts, leads us to ask the question and hypothesize: Do you ever wholly know someone? At the face of the issue, you would think yes, because I have known them for a certain number of years and experienced their good and bad sides. I would agree, yes, you know their good and bad sides, but the good and bad sides of the one piece of themselves they are showing you. Moreover, just because the single piece has a round personality and is not a flat character, it does not mean you know that whole individual well, just that single piece well. However, not completely knowing someone is beautiful and perfectly healthy. No one is expected to know their friend, spouse, and family through and through like they live within their skin. Plus, learning an individual and experiencing them like a stranger everyday sounds like quite an experience. So, that begs to ask further, why isn’t every healthy relationship so full of adventure, wonder, and continuous growth with the other person? Why

do we get stuck in similar altercations and engagements with other people, following somewhat of a relationship routine? Are these routines the byproduct, jadedness setting in and people taking each other for granted, or is it something deeper? I believe the answer lies within the expectations we develop around our relationships and the comfortability that comes along with the expectations.

## **Expectations**

*“When you stop expecting people to be perfect, you can like them for who they are.”*

*~Donald Miller*

Like the words of Donald Miller, expectations make individuals in a frame of light that is inhuman and on a godly tier. Moreover, not only do most individuals view the people as gods, but they capture the sliver of the individual and idolize that part of themselves. Though some people create expectations to worship friends or families, it makes it easier for people to navigate interactions with their loved ones. With people not having to work on the process of continually learning the individual's new and other fragments. Then, setting expectations on the individual, not only stops the deeper delving into that person's state of being but also places the persons under the expectation within a “personality cage.” By a “personality cage,” I mean a person must stay the same, act the same, perform the same for the rest of their life with this individual. However, this state of stagnancy created in the “personality cage” causes the person to not progress and evolve into the new person based on life and circumstances, but regress into their former selves. The continual regression of one's personality and soul can leave one feeling enslaved spiritually.

## **Coping with Expectations and its Constituted Spiritual Enslavement**

Being in this constant state of regression and one-dimensional performance for a long time causes individuals to pick up coping mechanisms to handle the repression or denial of their full, current selves. Some of the most significant ways I feel people do this is accepting and identifying the regular compartmentalization of their identity. They perform certain character roles based upon the perceived expectations of the other individual. This is how you will act a certain way around your parents, conscious of the do's and don'ts present when interacting with them. However, working inauthentically around your parents can cause an

emotional toll on an individual, in a sense, to have no way to talk with those who matter, genuinely and viscerally. That disconnect can cause one to feel trapped, alone, and misunderstood, similar of the feelings, I addressed within the introduction paragraph. Are these questions leading us to ask: how does one get past the expectations that come from essential relationships in our lives, where do we start? The start, I believe, is realize defined relationships and that aspirations are not necessary and cause more problems than solutions. Recognizing the fact that relationships and their balance are a spectrum, like sexuality, is essential in continuing to experience the infinite vastness of an individual's soul and get out of the environment of toxic expectations. Continually, instead of regarding your family as your family, one should address them as new, strange individuals and explore the universe of their souls.