

Who is this person? Is that really me? Which me?

... By Claire Knowles

My husband and I returned home from a long work trip just before Thanksgiving. Of course, there was some leisure sightseeing time built in to those travels too. Since we've returned, we've been reminiscing via digital photos/computer slide show.

There is one photo, in particular, that I can't bear to gaze upon... "Is that really me, I asked? If it is really me, then what happened? How did I come to look like that?"

Have you ever had this experience?

I've come to the conclusion that I must comprise *many selves-mostly contradictory*. That is, I'm like an octopus, with multiple tentacles. For example, which of my many selves decided it is okay to munch from the M&Ms in the candy jar each time I pass by it? It certainly can't be the same self that decided that *thin was in!* It can't be the same self that decided to do the crunches on the exercise/rowing machine. Which one is making my snack selections? Chances are it isn't the same one that vows to be healthy. How do I get my many selves all believing (again) in the same program? It would be good if I could get this figured out. *...Before the next round of New Year's resolutions!*

Cognitive Dissonance theory provides some great clues. Cognitive Dissonance is that uncomfortable feeling caused by holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously. It is when

one's beliefs and one's behaviors don't match up. Either I have to change my behavior with the M&Ms (to get in synch with the Belief that I need to be healthy), or I have to change what I believe to match the unhealthy behaviors (like... well at my age, with my genes, this is how it is, and a few M&Ms won't make much difference).

From Our Evolving Selves, by Peggy LaCena, come these good words: While it is our higher-order selves that commit to, long-term goals, it is a motley collection of lower-order selves that are left to the task of accomplishing them--this is not a winning strategy.

So, what is a successful strategy? To *consciously activate* a higher-order self. The moment you begin to observe your own thoughts, you begin to operate from a higher-order self. So, activate a "mental model of your intentional self" bringing it forth often throughout the day....before every meal...when walking by the M&Ms. It is the process of creating a clear picture of your intention (whatever that might be)....and seeing it clearly throughout the day...then grasping it again and again until it rises to reflect both your belief and your in-synch behaviors. *Intentional self-creation practice.*

Here's to the New Year! Here's to aligned beliefs and behaviors...may they match up beautifully!
(Bye-bye, octopus!) Lights On!

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