

“Solving the Mystery of You” 12 Session Guided Group Therapy Facilitators’ Packet

Packet Includes:

1. Syllabus
2. Session Notes
3. Weekly Handouts
4. Source Material

Solving the Mystery of You” Program Syllabus

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| 1. Introduction: Value of Self Knowledge
Group Structure, goals, method, handouts
What is self? Consciousness, The Unconscious
Modern life: Pressures to be X | Handout 1. Determinants |
| 2. Discuss Determinants, Pie Chart
Present Building Blocks of Self
Describe first 2 columns, nature, nurture | Handout 2A and 2B Building
Blocks, 2 columns on each |
| 3. Discuss Thoughts on first 2 columns
Present on innate (temperaments, 4 personalities) | Handouts 3A Defenses and
3B. Personality Types |
| 4. Discuss Thoughts on last 2 columns, whole
Present Biography Work, skills, goals
Talk about tasks of 0-14 years | Handout 4. Examine Ages
Birth to 14, Using Questions |
| 5. Discuss Experiences, stories of 0 to 14
Present on ages 14 to 28, challenges, tasks
Self-perceptions | Handout 5. Examine 14-28
Using Questions |

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| 6. Discuss Experiences, Self, ages 14 to 28
Present on ages 28 to 42. Forgiveness and
Baggage | Handout 6. Examine 28-42
Using Questions |
| 7. Discuss Experiences 28 to 42
Present on ages 42 and beyond | Handout 7. Ages 42 plus |
| 8. Discuss Age 42 and beyond
Present on Higher Self, Conscience | Handout 8. Consider the
Higher Self |
| 9. Discuss Higher Self
Present on Shadow Self, everyday evils | Handout 9. Shadow Self |
| 10. Discuss Shadow Self
Present on Religious/Spiritual Considerations | Handout 10. Personal
beliefs and experiences |
| 11. Discuss Individual's belief system
Present on Self esteem, Sense of Self
Life as a Heroic Journey, challenges,
Triumphs, Pitfalls | Handout 11. Heroic Journey
Write a poem/allegory/myth
fairytale/essay of life |
| 12. Group read their own heroic account
Present ideas on conscious growth, purpose
Meaning and going forward | |

Solving Program: Session 1

The goal of these 12 sessions is self knowledge, finding and living your authentic self

The benefits are great; the freedom to be you, self determination, confidence, following the laws of one's own being from which anxiety is reduced and depression lifted.

Method is guided group therapy. Guided in that there are topics each week for discussion, for which you will have a sheet of questions to think about in preparation. Group therapy because there is strength in a group, learning from others and having others listen and supporting you.

Focus: Understanding the self from multiple view points, disciplines and theories. These basic tenets are nature (heredity), nurture (environment), innate temperament and personality type, structure of your personality and then seeing how your self developed through time which is biography work.

Let's start:

What is the self? We all have a sense of who we are, within our skin, but there are real unanswered questions about the limits of consciousness, what is in the unconscious. These unanswered questions block research on self knowledge. Some therapeutic approaches ignore the unconscious like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Learning Theory while others really focus on it Psychodynamic (Freud), Jungian, trying to bring it to awareness.

Even though there is not any definitive definition, we will dive in anyway—as much can be gained from what we can discern. Besides, each person's self is distinguished by what is unique, exceptional about them.

Being a self aware, self guided self is hard in this culture. There are so many pressures from many different directions telling us who we should be and how we should conduct our lives, it is especially hard in these times to 'be your own person'

Culture:

Family, what you should do, be, expectations, subtle consequences, what are their visions of you?

Work, school, friend group: what are you supposed to be? Devote yourself to?

TV, advertisements: Strategy to make people feel bad about themselves or promise you will be more popular/beautiful/successful if you do X, buy X

Social Media:

Idea of influencers is disconcerting

Pressure to conform, sanctions cancelled/ostracized

Top Selling Book "Top Five Regrets of the Dying" by Bronnie Ware:

"I wish I had the courage to live a life true to myself"

The first handout asks you to look at how much you feel free to live a life true to yourself.

There is a circle which is the beginning of a pie chart, in which you should place a value/percentage of how much anyone of the factors listed, or others if you identify another vector that influences or determines who you are and how you conduct your life.

This has proven to be a very enlightening exercise which we will discuss next week.

Solving Program Handout 1 (Session 2)

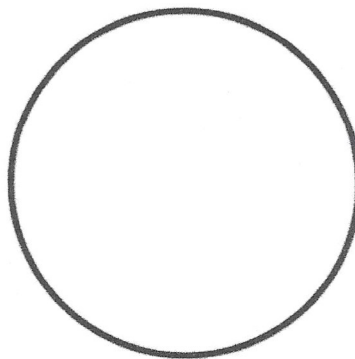
Template for Determinants of Who You Define Yourself to Be and How You Conduct Your Life

How we define ourselves, think of ourselves and then the decisions we make based on these perceptions contribute to who we become, the choices we make, and how we live our lives. The inputs for this come from many sources, some valid and helpful, some not and some out of proportion in influence.

This handout cites many possible sources for our self-definition and therefore influences the choices we make about how to conduct our lives. Among the many sources are:

- a. What parents and family expect and tell us we should be or do.
- b. What the culture expects and tells us we should be and how we should live.
- c. What our peers and social media (influencers) tell us how we should live and be.
- d. What our own personality, traits, drives, desires, dreams lead us to do and be.
- e. What our hereditary endowments—looks, intelligence, talents lead us to be or assume we want to become.
- f. Our innate being, closer to our authentic self guides us to what feels right for us.
- g. What our defensive pattern, not trusting, angry, controlling, does to limit us in what we become.
- h. Our adaptive personas, patterns or a face we acquire to earn love, please, be accepted, and to fit in, lead us away from our authentic selves.
- i. How our attachment style influences us in the freedom we have to be our true selves.

Use the circle below to make a pie chart giving approximate proportions to which of the above factors determine who you are and how you conduct your life. What criteria do you have to meet to feel adequate or good enough?



Solving Program: Session 2

Discussion:

What did you find? Each member talks in turn about their self discoveries.

From these more external factors that impact who you are and how you conduct your life, we are going to turn more to internal.

Next under consideration are what I am calling the building blocks of self, basically what you have been given, endowed with and have to work with. These fit into four categories:

1. Nature/ Heredity which include your sex, race, size, build, intelligence, attractiveness, talents, health and predispositions to illness, talents

These are not always examined when considering who you become, but each of them can play a very large role. Attractiveness and Intelligence are both impactful, yet people seem to have a hard time owning them.

In this negative culture, individuals seem reluctant to own their good points/abilities. But might I point out if you don't own to a talent/trait, then you don't know to use it to enrich your life.

Now a child might be very intelligent in a family which degrades being smart, or the parents are jealous/threatened by a child who is smarter than they are. So they grow up on negative messages and don't take ownership of their intelligence.

Beauty is even more complex, whether they admit it or not, people react to another person's looks and beauty skews the reaction more than ugliness. No one might compliment a beautiful girl, assuming she knows it, and also distance from her and comparisons. What might the beautiful girl think? She probably doesn't own to beauty and feels there must be something wrong with her, people don't like her.

Rarely do you hear someone say out loud they have this talent, which isn't as important as their telling themselves and owning to this.

Size and build make a difference too, a 5'6" man experiences life differently than a 6'2" man

2. Nurture/ Environment This category includes your country, culture, religion, and your family situation. Whether the family is rich or poor, functional/dysfunctional,

value put on education, traditions, attachment style. More, there is where the individual fits into the family—birth order, assigned role.

The last child raised in a sibling group of 6 might be kept closer to home with the intent, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the parents that this child will take care of them in old age. Therefore, this child is not encouraged to individuate but stay enmeshed with the parents.

The culture/religion might have ascribed roles for women which are limiting. Or one child might be assigned the role of scape goat, in contrast to another who is the golden child. The first child may be so good, pleasing to the parents, the second, to get attention becomes very misbehaving, which is very detrimental to him. Or a parent is over-identified with one child, living through the child, so the child has to become (or rebel) against the mold the parent has in mind for them.

Here are the handouts for the next two weeks, which have a blank page with four columns for the building blocks of self. Please use the filled in sheet, just for ideas, of what you were born with and the situation/environment of your childhood and which aspects had the most impact on who you are and how you live your life.

The aspects listed are by no means cover all possibilities, so put down what fits you.

Solving Program: Handout 2A (session 3)

Building Blocks of the Self Columns 1 and 2

Nature/Hereditv

Nurture/Environment

Consider:

Body build, size height
Sex/Gender
Features/Attractiveness
Intelligence (IQ, EQ)
Health Predispositions
Talents/music, arts
Race/Ethnicity
Physical/Athletic

Country: stable, war, good times?
Culture/ Religion
Family situation, functional/dysfunctional
Family Traditions
Attachment Style
Birth order/family role
Education, value on
Wealth/social class

Solving Program: Handout 2B (session 3)

Building Blocks of the Self Columns 3 and 4

Innate

Personality Structure

Consider:

Chess/Thomas Temperaments

- Activity
- Rhythmicity
- Approach/ Withdrawal
- Adaptability
- Intensity
- Mood
- Persistence and Attention
- Distractibility
- Sensory Threshold

Personality Types

- Sanguine
- Choleric
- Melancholic
- Phlegmatic

- Freud: ego/id/superego
- Executive ego: judgement, decisions
- Unconscious/ Conscious
- Defensive Patterns
- Primitive, lower self
- Inner Child
- Anima/Animus (male/female)
- Personas/Adaptive Personalities
- Jung's Archetypes
 - Innocent, Destroyer
 - Orphan, Creator
 - Warrior, Ruler
 - Caregiver, Magician
 - Seeker, Sage
 - Lover, Jester

Solving Program: Session 3

Discuss findings on filling out first two columns—nature and nurture

Present on the last two building blocks of self—innate and structures

Innate temperaments and personality styles

History: Freudian dominated psych/sexual, then BF Skinner behaviorism, baby 'tabula rasa' Followed from each therapeutic approaches; psychodynamic retrieve Unconscious material, family systems see UCS operating and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Learning Theory. In neither are innate traits acknowledged.

Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas published results of a long term study of 133 babies tracking their development and identified 9 enduring, innate, born with traits. These are listed on the filled out Building Blocks handout. It names mood as enduring and you can see that there are Tiggers and Eyores, they stay that way all through their lives. This was a landmark study, establishing that babies come into the world with personality traits, which every mother knows.

Funny how the disciplines don't interact for if we follow philosophy, going back to at least 400 BC with Hippocrates. Four definite dispositions or personality types have been known throughout the ages, first called the 4 Biles (black-spleen, yellow-gallbladder, blood, phlegm) and health depended on balancing these four. This approach lasted well into the middle ages, increasingly associated with personality types. The names changed. Fast forward to Carl Jung who gave these 4 the names; sensation, feeling, thinking and intuition and said each has an extrovert quality and an introvert quality. This is the basis of Myers-Briggs.

So, look at the four animals pictured, Is there one that speaks to you? Each is associated with a personality type. Then look at the next page of handouts at the four types now using older names: Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholic and Phlegmatic. Each person has a dominant type, a secondary type as well as traits for all the types.

Note the overlap and similarities with the 9 temperaments listed on the Building Blocks hand out, both traditional wisdom and empirical, research psychology converges here. Use either of the 4 types or the 9 traits to identify which apply to you.

Also, there is a fourth column labeled structures with terms used by various psychological theories for functions of the self. Each theory seems to have its own terminology and

concepts, but all can be useful. Are you predominantly impulsive and driven by appetites, or are you very much in your executive ego—over thinking and frozen from action—or are you lost to yourself and just act to please others? How much of your actions, being to protect your self-esteem which is fragile? What is your main aim, pleasure (Freud), power (Gordon Allport) or meaning (Viktor Frankl) or something else. Another way to say this is, what stands out about you and how you operate or your attitude, stance?

I also put Jung's Archetypes in the 4th column, they are the roles you take and are pretty self-explanatory. These designations might speak to you and then use them to describe yourself. As I said, each psychology theory offers a new language, but also insights.

I also ask you to look at the accompanying page listing defenses, we all have them. They are necessary, but you want to employ the healthiest, not the most limiting and isolating of them. For example, Sublimation is the highest form of defense, it is turning negative emotions into positive actions. The best example is MADD where a mother who lost a child to a drunk driver turned her grief, anger, and depression into action, changing the laws across the country to make drunk driving a crime. This is contrast to anger used as a defense, it alienates others, isolates the individual who uses this. I suspect you have seen people for whom anger is their all purpose reaction. Compartmentalizing can be healthy and beneficial, but it also can fragment the person's inner life and emotions. Projection and denial prevent the individual from having to deal with the reality of their own self.

So, the assignment is to fill out columns 3 and 4 using all these prompts depending on which apply to you and have an impact on who you are and how you conduct your life. Your innate personality traits or style and one look at what structures seem to dominate in your personality?

Solving Program Handout 3A (Session 4)

List of Defenses

- Projection: attributing to another your negative quality
- Displacement: transfer emotions from correct target/source onto another
- Denial: won't accept reality
- Repression: blocks unpleasant feelings, events, memories
- Suppression: repression but with more consciousness
- Regression: reverts to an earlier developmental stage in face of stress
- Rationalization: justify unacceptable behavior
- Intellectualization: keep all emotions out of considerations, just thoughts
- Reaction Formation: replace initial reaction with the opposite, hide truth
- Sublimation: channel negative emotions to positive actions, healthy
- Compartmentalize: separate parts of life, avoid conflicting emotions
- Distraction: avoid feeling, dealing by focus on something else
- Dissociation: spacing out, checking out, disconnect from that reality
- Undoing: erase memory, say the opposite
- Passive aggressive: out let for anger, indirect not what is done but what is not
- Humor: often used to deflect or defend from real feelings can be healthy
- Act out: Not deal with emotions—expressed in actions children, teens use
- Avoidance: stay away from people/places that trigger negative feelings
- Conversion: Emotional distress, displaced to body in illness or sensory arena
- Isolation of Affect: Event recalled without any associated affect
- Anger: keeps people away, no challenges, don't have to deal with issue
- Sarcasm: Puts other's off, defensive, not deal with issue

Solving Program: Handout 3B
Images of Animals



Solving Program: Handout 3B

Four Personality Types

Melancholic

Blue/water
Deep thinker
Poetic & Analytical
Feels things deeply
Takes things personally
Devoted and Compassionate
Thoughtful and reserved
Empathic
Overwhelmed by tasks
Sometimes anxious and depressed
Glass ½ empty
Fearful

Choleric

Red/fire
Quick in Action
Natural Leader
Keen Interests
Quick to judge
Gets things done
Organized
Ambitious
Heroic
Easy to anger/unforgiving
Demanding and aggressive
Too much self

Phlegmatic

Green/earth
Relaxed and peaceful
Cheerful and easy going
Likes comfort and predictability
Peacemaker
Prefers routine
Reliable
Likes to be left alone
Quiet and complacent
Can be hard to motivate
Avoids crisis and conflict
Appears lazy

Sanguine

Yellow/Air
Social but more superficial
Likes activities
Open to discussions
Loves people
Delights in change
Loving and forgiving
Talkative
Innovative
Trouble concentrating
Forgetful
Doesn't follow through/complete projects

Solving Program: Session 4

Discuss last 2 columns of Building Blocks of Self, then chart as a whole, discoveries?

Pleasant surprises, things to work on

Present for the next session: Years 0 to 14

0 to 7 Coming into Life: Newborns can see but have no context, self and world merged so they must learn to differentiate (watch an infant discover his hand and that he can move it) by 2 or so, the child has a sense of “me”, of self. With good nurturing they develop trust in the world, bond then with this safety begin to explore their world. A huge challenge at which they work very hard at learning to roll over, sit, crawl, stand, walk. They are asked to control their bladder and bowel, not always to their liking. They learn to talk expressing more the sense of “I” in the use of the word “no”, now having preferences, decisions. The world is magical as they explore and see something for the first time.

Pitfalls: inadequate trust or secure bond, anxious, criticized, no confidence, withdrawal.

7 to 14 From Light to Shadow: joyous, free 7-year-old to moody, confused 14 year old. The main task is learning, from rote learning to analytical thinking. Learning the ways of the world, embracing rules as seen in games, peers enforce them. World is still magical as seen in play for a 7-year-old but turns darker for the adolescent. There is a stronger sense of self as seen in independence, activity, choices. The child remains asexual for the most part.

Pitfalls: over control by adults, exposure to adult problems, adult sexuality, excessive criticism taking confidence and willingness to try new things away.

This handout number 4 is a list of questions to help you reflect on your life from birth to age 14. Each of you will have time to talk about your story during these years next week.

A word about listening to each other's stories: we are to listen with an open heart, living the experiences described in our minds, not judging or analyzing. Our feedback can be very helpful as we mirror (reflect back what we hear not just in the words but in the tone, intensity and what is there, but unsaid) and reflect on the other's stories.

Solving Program: Handout 4 (session 5)

Questions for Session 5: birth to 14 years

1. What is your earliest memory? Do you have many memories of your childhood? Are they happy?
2. What experience in these years is emblematic or best represents who you are?
3. What were you like as a child? In school? At home? In the neighborhood?
4. Did your natural personality shine through or did you have to play a role to please others, gain attention, protect yourself? False personas can be conformer, pleaser, Public self (differs from true self), rebellious self.
5. Who were you closest to? How would you describe your friendship patterns?
6. Did you like yourself? Have confidence? Were you happy?

Solving Program: Session 5

Discuss ages birth to 14. Every member talk about their life using the questions as guides, but also they are encouraged to say what they want or need to say. Remind the group that we are to listen with an open heart, not judging or analyzing, mirroring back to them what they said and perhaps what was between the lines.

Present ideas for ages 14 to 21 and 21 to 28

Ages 14 to 21 Adolescence Emotional Realm Forms

Great changes take place in the body going from a child to a fully sexualized adult. There is more individuation and separation gaining a stronger sense of self, uniqueness. This often leads to rebellion, not only if parents are too controlling but also if adolescent is very tightly bonded and acts out to separate. The executive ego develops with higher thinking, judgment, impulse control, cause and effect, and then abstract thinking. The young adult begins having a sense of inner self, maybe spiritual feelings/seeking. The craziness and confusion of the teen years diminishes by 21.

Pitfalls are many: the traumas and resulting emotions of childhood come to the fore, often with acting out (sexual, drugs and alcohol and violence), greater incidence of suicide and withdrawal from life (epitomized by living in the parental basement, smoking pot and playing video games all day). Entry into adulthood can be delayed for some due to college.

Ages 21 to 28 Chase the Experience, First Foray into Adulthood

The young adult experiments with identities, lifestyles, seeks new experiences to find their place in the world. In this first foray into adulthood, they may make choices for career, work, community, for location and for intimacy and love. The inner self is developing as they seek meaning and purpose, a direction and sense of their lives.

Pitfalls: If the young adult doesn't have a strong enough sense of self or confidence, they may not venture or try new things, staying stuck. The results may be to feel isolated, out of place and give up on themselves.

This next handout 5 contains questions to help guide you as you review and examine your life from ages 14 to 28.

Solving Program: Handout 5 (session 6)

Thinking about Ages 14 to 28:

1. How would you characterize your adolescent years?
2. Did your outer world see you for who you were? And did that match how you felt about yourself?
3. Did you feel loved and accepted by your peers, your family, your community?
4. Did you engage in any self-defeating/harmful behaviors? (sex, substances, unlawful)
5. What experiences did you try, and decisions did you make in your first adult years? (Intimate relationships, career, location and lifestyle)
6. Were you free to make your own choices that were true to yourself? Did you take on a false persona to conform, please someone else, hide, pretend?
7. Did the decisions you made for your life ages 21 to 28 work for you? Why or why not?

Solving Program: Session 6

Discuss Experiences, Lives, Self Development Ages 14 to 28

How would you summarize who you were in those years? (Exploring, lost, angry, deflated, discouraged, depressed, happy, optimistic, etc.?)

Present Ideas on Ages 28 to 42:

Ages 28 to 35: Adjusting the Course

The early years of this life phase is a time of processing, reflection, building the self and if needed, of changing direction in life. The true self seeks to manifest in all aspect of life, activities and relationships that are congruent with the inner values, morals and desires. As a result, the first years may be unsettling until the right path is found. Then the last years of this phase become a time of expansion. Gratification can be great as the individual is on their own, not guided, supported or directed by family, peers, school, friends. The result can be greater confidence and understanding of the who, what's and whys of life.

Pitfalls are found in over reliance on others and not listening to one's self.

Ages 35 to 42: Under Self Power

Age 42 marks full adulthood and all the responsibilities of that role—children, perhaps caring for aging parents, career and community involvement.

Pitfalls: habit locked, having a routine, set life that is no longer meaningful or gratifying. The middle age crisis, illness, neglect of inner self and development.

Goal Discovery of self efficacy and self esteem, "I can do."

A Bit on Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a gift not only to another but to the self.

See supporting material—introduce it with 'Here is a true story written by an army doctor sent into a concentration camp to help the prisoners at the end of World War II. He describes a Polish prisoner who spoke 6 languages and the help he gave in sorting the prisoners. This man's name was so complex, the medical team just called him Wild Bill Cody.

Read the text—

Forgiving cleans out the ugly emotions we have when we hold onto resentments and anger. This next passage suggests benefits beyond that. Read Prokofieff's paragraph starting with "What is meant here.."

The baggage we carry around is heavy and weighs us down with its anger, resentments, negativity, envy, tarnishing our very beings. Think about it, forgive others and ourselves and let it go.

The handout list questions for discussion at our next session.

Solving Program: Source Material Session 6

Text taken from: Prokofieff, Sergei. "The Occult Significance of Forgiveness." Temple Lodge
London, 1995. Pages 22, 23 and 46.

This is the account of an American psychiatrist at the end of World War II when his unit was sent into a German concentration camp to aide the prisoners. That is where he met the Polish prisoner who the Americans referred to as Wild Bill Cody, because of his unpronounceable name. Multilingual, he was assigned to assist the unit with the prisoners. Bill Cody looked different than the other prisoners, "his posture was erect, his eyes bright, his energy indefatigable." Here is what George Richie wrote about him:

"But though Bill Cody worked 15 and 16 hours a day, he showed no signs of weariness. While the rest of us were dropping with fatigue, he seemed to gain strength saying 'We have time for this old fellow,' his compassion for his fellow prisoners glowed on his face." I was astonished to learn when Wild Bill's own papers came before us one day that he had been at Wuppertal since 1939. Six years he had lived on the same starvation diet, slept in the same airless and disease ridden barracks, but without the least physical or mental deterioration." He also discovered it was Wild Bill that settled disputes not just because he spoke 5 languages, but because he got along and was trusted by all.

Finally, Bill Cody related his own story: "We lived in the Jewish section of Warsaw, my wife, our two daughters and our three little boys. When the Germans reached our street they lined everyone against a wall and opened up with machine guns. I begged to be allowed to die with my family, but because I spoke German, they put me in a work camp."

I had to decide right then, whether to let myself hate the soldiers who had done this. It was an easy decision, really. I was a lawyer. In my practice I had seen too often what hate could do to people's minds and bodies. Hate had just killed the six people who mattered most to me in the world. I decided then that I would spend the rest of my life—whether it was a few days or many years loving every person I came into contact with."

Richie concluded, "Loving every person....was the power that had kept a man's will in the face of every privation." It was forgiveness and beyond.

"This is not an ordinary kind of forgetting, but rather that in this process all subjective reactions, such as an inner protest or antipathy, must give way to perfect equanimity and acceptance of destiny. The injustice that has been inflicted can be wholly objectified by the person concerned and completely separated from his own personality. The negative, begrudging memory must gradually go through a kind of death (forgetting) in order to rise as *forgiveness*, that is, as a strong will to restore to the world the good of which it had been deprived by the wrongful deed. One will then remember such a deed only to the extent that this is necessary for true forgiveness to come about."

Solving Program: Handout 6 (session 7)

Think about Ages 28 to 42. Questions:

1. What did you want to change in your life? Were you able to make these changes?
2. How did you make sense of your life? Purpose, Meaning, Your Role?
3. Did you have a sense of having an inner life, a good feeling about yourself?
4. In ages 35 to 42, did you lose yourself or feel trapped by habit or circumstance?
5. Did you see a pattern, theme or repetitive situations in your life? How did you understand what you perceived?
6. Were you satisfied with who you had become and the life you were living. If not, how so?

Solving Program: Session 7

Discuss Ages 28 to 42: The turning point is age 42, full adulthood, change from becoming (taking in from life) to manifesting (giving back to the world)

Present: Age 42 and Beyond:

There are 4 distinct phases from 42 to 63, each characterized by different challenges, yet always a constant thread running through a person's life.

1. 42-49 The Dark Wood

The individual might ask "What have I done with my life?" and "Is this all there is?" as they realize they are no longer young. The challenge is to accept personal limitations and face the hard truths and make the most of it. Under this the inner self continues to grow.

Pitfalls include trying to grasp at youth with behaviors like dressing in young styles, buying a sports car. A person can't go back, life moves forward, and the need is to embrace that reality.

2. 49 to 56 A Second Wind

With less energy, vitality, life proceeds more slowly giving time for self-reflection.

The consequences of past actions may rise to the fore, illness, depression, substance abuse as well as the confusion and frustration of an unexamined life.

This is another phase for a change in direction with inner growth, bursts of creativity and new pursuits.

Pitfalls are being stuck, unhappy, bitter when the person fails to adjust, be flexible, and self-reflect to be able to live forwards.

3. 56 to 63 Reaping the Harvest

Old age is approaching with external changes in health, loss of loved ones, loneliness, retirement. Still there is an inner push for more self reflection as the person draws wisdom from the many years, experiences, and lessons of their life.

Pitfalls are not to accept aging and as a result compete with and resent the young or quit life and become very old. With these options, it is hard to tell someone's age.

4. 63 to 70 Drawing the Threads

Spreading and sharing their knowledge, investing in the world with less focus on the self is the task of this phase. The challenge is to look outward.

Pitfalls included becoming self-absorbed, obsessed with health.

5. Beyond: Continue to invest in humanity, see all as your heirs, can better face death

Acceptance of self, life lived.

Disengagement from body

Turning to the spiritual, religion

Pitfall "Being dead before you died"

Handout: answer to your age, if younger answer some for your imaginary self.

Solving Program: Handout 7 (Session 8)

Review your life age 42 to present to answer these questions:

1. What have you learned? Life lessons?
2. How have you grown and changed?
3. What is the best of you? Do you like yourself? Feel proud of your life so far?
4. That is the theme of your life? What do you discern to be the purpose and meaning of your life?
5. Is there a type of situation or type of personality, a pattern, that keeps popping up in your life that presents you with a challenge? How have you handled these and have you found a solution? (Example pattern of abusive relationships, pattern of being controlled)

Solving Program: Session 8

Each member talks, saying what they feel is important to them age 42 and beyond, some feedback and support given.

How is your self esteem now? (Good, stable self esteem is empowering, bestowing freedom and confidence to be your authentic self, have independence in thought and actions, and have courage to try new things and go into the unknown.

Present on the Higher Self, also the Inner Voice of Criticism and Doubt

Within each individual is a higher self to one extent or another. This higher self encompasses the values we hold, virtues we possess, our capacity for love, empathy and compassion and is a doorway for any sacred or spiritual feelings.

The virtues historically were much talked about, even being popular girl's names: Hope, Faith, Charity, Chastity, Prudence, Temperance. Also, there is honesty, forbearance, sacrifice for a higher good, loyalty, justice, fortitude, modesty.

These are not words much used in these modern times, rather charisma, ambition, success, etc. The teaching of these characteristics were the family and church/religion, both institutions are now weaker.

Even if an individual is exposed to these values and virtues, what incentive/ cause an individual to follow what is right? This, especially with the temptations of the alternatives for short term, material gains. This is the role of conscience (Freud's Superego), which also seems to be lacking or more and more in our culture where no one is guilty, wrong or sorry. This is the structure in the higher self that makes the individual uncomfortable, even miserable for knowingly doing wrong or going against the values and virtues they hold.

The good news is that both a conscience and better values and virtues can be consciously developed and embraced.

Love is another aspect of the higher self, going from self love to love of family to love of community/country to love of all mankind. Love is all giving not receiving, you only wish the best for the person you love, even if it doesn't involve you.

The inner critical voice. Many people can't give themselves credit or own their talents, abilities or virtues, dismissing any compliment from others. Also, some people seem to take on guilt when it doesn't belong to them, taking responsibility for all outcomes. This can be very destructive. It doesn't allow them to own and use their positive and depresses any self esteem.

Solving Program: Handout 8 (session 9)

Consider the following Questions:

1. What is love to you?
2. Can you love yourself?
3. What goodness do you most value about yourself?
4. Which Virtue and Value has been most helpful or has had the biggest impact?
5. How strong is your conscience?
6. What does the critical inner voice tell you about yourself?
7. Do you compare yourself to others?
8. How would you like to grow and develop in your higher self?

Solving Program: Session 9

Each member talks about their higher self, following the guidelines as they wish, saying what is important to them.

Present Shadow Self:

We all have a shadow self, perhaps not doing any of the really bad/evil behaviors like theft, abuse, torture, mayhem or murder, rather the every days evil. The nasty words or deed we do which are often sourced in the lower self of instincts, impulses and the unconscious. It is far better to know and control what lurks in the shadow self, than to let our lower selves have free rein. There is no growth if we don't face our wrongful behaviors and own to them. Moreover, if we can, it is helpful to identify the underlying causes, woundedness from which these stem.

The everyday evils include: gossip, manipulations, isolating someone, exploitation, causing suffering or not relieving it when you could, put downs, teasing and mocking, envy, hatred, slander, extinguishing someone else's goodness, hatred. Where does this shadow self come from? Carl Jung and other psychological theorists all cite the woundedness of the individual's self/ego which is repressed. These repressed ideas, weaknesses, desires, base instincts of the lower self then manifest as judging, blaming, being a victim, projecting, anger, greed and need for power. Also within the wounded self is a lack of compassion, empathy, objectification of others allowing hurtful acts to be performed.

Reflect on the handout questions about your shadow self.

Solving Program: Handout 9 (session 10)

Examine and ponder your shadow self to answer the following questions:

1. What everyday evils do you find yourself doing with the intention of hurting or upsetting (even if unconscious and impulsive) another person? These include: envy, resentment, pettiness, gossip, competitiveness that gets personal, inability to praise others, need to control others, projections, denial, arrogance, greed, enjoying other people's misery, etc.)
2. Do you feel uncomfortable or a twinge of conscience after these behaviors. If not, what defense do you use to justify your actions, denial, projections, justification of some sort?
3. Do you have a sense of the underlying reasons for your negative behaviors? What wound in your life do they reflect?
4. What do you believe about evil?

Solving Program: Session 10

Each member of the group in turn discusses the topic of their shadow self, using the handout and sharing what they feel most relates to them. It can be very empowering to share your acts of everyday evils, owning them so they can be controlled and transformed.

Spiritual and Religious Considerations

It is important that in this we are not talking about religious dogma, institutional rules and regulations, they are a product of mankind. Rather your own experiences, beliefs and feelings about their being something beyond the world of man that is our topic. These are unique to you, highly personal and your truth as you experience life.

A few concepts that might be relevant to you are karma and destiny.

Karma is the principle that every action, work or deed has an effect or consequence, so all one's actions towards others, animals and the earth will come back in equal measure, whether good or bad. The eastern religions, Buddhism Hinduism believe in karma, often played out in multiple lifetimes (reincarnation). The Christian and Islamic religion does not support reincarnation but rather “—whatever a man sows, that he shall reap.” In other words, there are consequences to actions.

Destiny indicates there is a guiding hand for each life, determining what circumstance may arise or what events or people will appear in an individual's life, giving meaning. Beliefs in predetermination and degree to which a life is preordained varies. Many people, not religious, do believe that things happen for a reason,

Again, as you work on the handout questions over the next week, think only in terms of your thoughts, feelings and experiences. There are no right answers.

Solving Program: Handout 10 (Session 11)

Examine the spiritual and religious if and how they may apply to your life, thoughts, feelings, actions and experiences.

1. Have you had:
Experiences for which there are no explanations?
Synchronicities, intertwined experiences that appear to be meaningfully related?
Psychic experiences, a sixth sense, feel a presence that baffle you and appear inexplicable?
Being in a place or meeting a person, and have the feeling you have been there or met them before, yet know you haven't?
2. Have you experienced the sacred? Is that feeling something you hope to find again?
3. Do you have a sense of being guided towards a certain purpose in your life? Does this path feel like it fits with your authentic self?
4. Do you believe that things happen for a reason?
5. What is your philosophy/understanding of life, your belief systems that grounds you? Does that include a higher power?

Solving Program: Session 11

Each member addresses their thoughts, feelings and experiences in the spiritual/religious realm. Also, they may talk about their basic philosophy/beliefs which guide them in life.

Question: Do you feel comforted by your belief system in life?

Present: Knowing and Being Your Authentic Self and Life as a Heroic Journey

Each individual is unique and to be celebrated. Each individual being made up of innate personality traits, inherited endowments, environmental and family situations, and just the process of living through the years.

There is no purpose, nothing to be gained in comparing yourself to others or even to external expectations. You are on your own unique life path.

It is difficult to have good self esteem in this culture, which is negative and holds up models of unrealistic perfection. Moreover, the commercial world's aim is to make people feel lacking so the appeal of their products to make a person more beautiful, successful or to be envied by others and thereby, buy their products is more effective. Afterall, if you drink this brand of beer, you will be just like the beautiful people in the commercials.

Good self esteem, accepting yourself, owning your good and bad, talents and shortcomings, seeing your beauty, and promise for the future has so many benefits. Good self esteem/self knowledge gives you more courage and confidence, independence of thought and action, freedom to be your authentic self (have fidelity to the laws of one's own being—Jung). Good self esteem also has been shown by research to be preventive and curative of the inner disorders of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and the external acting out disorders of drug and alcohol abuse, violence and destructiveness.

To build and maintain that solid sense of self, it is helpful to develop your life story, (Biographical Memory) from the store of your experiences, values, beliefs, and goals. It helps to ground you which is needed in today's fractional world without values or standards. Your story should tell the heroic journey that has been your life.

Solving Program: Handout 11 (Session 12)

This final week's assignment is to tell your life's story as a heroic journey. There are many formats that you can use; a fairy tale, a fable, a myth, an allegory, a poem or a one page essay, your choice.

In putting your story together consider, whether and how you were gifted or challenged by Your heredity (nature), your environment and family situation (nurture), your innate temperament or personality style and the course that your life took.

Think about how you built strength and depth from difficult situations. Good times are grace, a gift, and bad times are lessons and result in growth, deepening. Where did you get nudged or helped? How did you change and grow?

Make this fun and play with it, use your imagination and creativity.

Solving Program: Session 12, Final

Each member presents their story as a heroic journey in the format they chose.
Feedback and support.

General Discussion:

1. What have you learned about yourself?
2. What changes have you made in your feelings, thoughts and behaviors.
3. Can you like yourself better? respect and value yourself?
4. Your future, what does it hold, what will you do differently?

Anything else?