



# INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

## Week 37 Transcript: Wounded Identity

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This week, we continue our discovery of the layers of identity and take a look at our Wounded Identity. In review, Our Idealized Identity is the unattainable projection of perfection we want people to believe is who we are so we can receive love and acceptance.

Our Adapted Identity is the layer that supports our Idealized Identity. It's the expression of how we've adjusted to defend ourselves in an unsafe world. Protected by these two layers is our Wounded Identity which is the tender, vulnerable part of who we are.

When we come into the world we don't know that it's an unsafe place where people can be hurtful and bad things happen. But quickly, as young people, this harsh reality begins to shape our identity and sense of ourselves.

The names we were called, the words we were literally cursed with, and our painful experiences in life mirror back to us an outside reflection of who we are. As we are developing, we begin to accept that this image of ourselves must be true.

It could be things like being told we're too sensitive, that we need to toughen up because life isn't fair. Or, being bullied or teased at school for being smarter or louder or bigger than the other kids.

We could be required to take care of the emotional needs of a parent, or the practical needs of a younger sibling, in a way that is inappropriate. Or, we could look out into the world to see if there's anyone who sees us, notices us, or wants to pay attention to us and realize we're on our own and have to take care of our own needs.

It also comes from stressful events like trauma, abuse, injury, failure, disappointment and loss. It's difficult to process these experiences, so we internalize them and begin to narrate our story of shame.

In the wounded layer of our identity we hold all the ways we believe, and have been told, we'll never be enough or we'll always be too much.



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There is an unhealed wound that says we are fundamentally flawed. Since we feel rejected, we begin to abandon ourselves. As humans, we carry the universal fear of disconnection. I believe it is the strongest and most primal of all our fears.

The Wounded Identity is what we fear others will see in us and, therefore, reject or abandon. Contrary to the Idealized Identity, it's how we do not want to be perceived. It's the part of us that we believe is unloveable, and therefore must be hidden.

This is why we push so hard to perform in our Adapted Identity to project to the world an Idealized version of ourselves. We just want to be loved and accepted so we can experience meaningful connection in our lives. But, we end up feeling unseen and unknown and that people only like us for what they perceive us to be outside of these protective walls.

We get ourselves into a quandary. We fear dropping these layers to reveal all of who we are, yet this process is absolutely required in becoming all we were created to be. Joseph Campbell said, "The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek."

Integrating this Layer of Identity requires courage to face our fear, shame, disappointment and loss and let go of our False identity and all the ways we protect ourselves.

Entering into the courageous work of healing and integrating our Wounded Identity is the cave that holds the treasure of our whole self. It requires courage to cultivate resiliency and let go of our Disempowered Identity, choosing self-responsibility and empowerment.

This process invites radical love and acceptance for ourselves as we practice self-compassion. That's what integration is - embracing all of the aspects of ourselves, not just what we deem as "enough" by an outside standard.

By definition, that makes it unconditional. We are worthy of love and belonging, just because. Next week we continue our discovery of the layers of identity and take a look at our Original Identity.



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For now, increase awareness around this layer of your identity and how it might be keeping you from authentic connection - the pathway to truly being known. Be sure to download the action guide to support this process and share what you are learning on our group page.