

Frequently Asked Questions

by John Kent

What is Voice Dialogue?

Voice Dialogue is a method for entering into direct communication with a person's inner community of selves. Each self or sub-personality is addressed with full recognition of both its individual importance and its role as only a part of the total personality.

Who created it?

It was created by two therapists, Drs Hal and Sidra Stone in the late 1970's and developed out of issues arising in their own relationship. For more information about their work and publications go to: www.voicedialogue.net

What is the Psychology of Selves?

This is the name that Dr's. Hal and Sidra Stone have given to the theoretical framework for Voice Dialogue. It describes the development of the different selves; the interaction of the selves with one another; and the relationship between the selves of two people or *bonding patterns*. It also includes the three levels of the *Consciousness Model: Awareness, Experience of the Selves and Aware Ego*.

What is a Primary Self?

This is a self that is dominant in the personality and one that a person is identified with. There is an initial primary self that developed in infancy or early childhood which can be called the Protector/Controller or Security Guard. Other typical Primary selves for Westerners are: the Rulemaker, the Critic, the Pusher, the Pleaser, the Perfectionist. As a person matures, other selves develop or come forward, so a primary self may be current but not initial.

What is the role of the Protector/Controller or Security Guard?

This part is the first of the primary selves to develop to protect the Vulnerable Child and to control the child's behaviour in an effort to gain whatever love and approval is available from those around the child.

What is the Primary Selves System?

This consists of Protector/Controller or Security Guard and the other primary selves (e.g. the Rulemaker, the Critic, the Pusher, etc.) that it encouraged to develop to protect the child and to support its aims and aspirations. This system sets the tone and value structure of the personality and is unique to each of us. There can be the *initial* primary selves system and the *current* primary selves system. For example: an original conservative system and a current liberal or "New Age" one.



Voice Dialogue UK
2 Alexandra Road
Richmond TW9 2BS

07941 • 141377
www.voicedialogue.org.uk

What are Disowned Selves?

These are the selves that represent the opposite value structure from the primary selves. They are the selves that had to be rejected or hidden in the growing up process.

What are Disowned Instinctual Selves?

These are selves that have been so deeply buried that they have taken on a highly charged energy. They are very threatening to the primary system. When they come out, they can cause the primary selves lots of anxiety and problems, as when a normally mild mannered person becomes violent or verbally vicious under the influence of alcohol.

What is an Acting or Operating Ego?

This is an ego that is identified with the primary selves system. This identification can shift throughout one's lifetime. For example: at the age of 25 one may still be identified with the original selves that might be conservative in the sense of having attitudes like, "Keep a smile on your face", "Don't let anyone see you crying", "Act tough", "Make sure everyone likes you". After a few years in a personal growth or recovery program, the ego may become identified with a "New Age" Protector/Controller or Security Guard that values, "Letting it all hang out". Often the selves of the initial primary system then become the current disowned selves.

What is an Aware Ego?

This is an ego that can exist separately from the selves we have identified with and can acknowledge those selves which we have disowned. It is an ego that can hold the tension of opposites. An Aware Ego is always in process. This is a hallmark in the process of individuation and the evolution of consciousness.

What happens in a Voice Dialogue session?

A Voice Dialogue session might take an hour or more. The form is quite simple. The client sits opposite the facilitator and moves his or her chair to different places in order to access the different selves that wish to speak. After talking to a self, the client moves back to the starting place - the Aware Ego. The facilitator's skill lies in helping the client experience each self fully and then separate from it. In a typical session, the facilitator may talk to three or four different selves.