

Your dark side is where your beauty lives

I have [written before](#) about how powerful it can be to feel our so-called “negative” feelings. You know what I mean...there is a part of you that has probably felt rage, grief, loss or crippling self-doubt, also known as your dark side. These feelings are a part of the human experience – to be human means that we feel this way, some of the time. When we are struggling in life, trying to gain a foothold where it feels there is none, these feelings become more intense. The more intense they become, the harder they are to ignore, and the harder they are to ignore, the harder we try to ignore them by distracting ourselves with other things. Or we might break down, becoming overwhelmed by guilt that we aren't living the happy, positive life others may think we are. We might feel ashamed, that we act out in ways we know will only lead to more pain. Whatever it is that you feel during your dark times, know that it is this place that holds the rawest expression of your inner beauty.

What is beauty, after all? Is it shiny, perfect and flawless? If that were the case, then there would be far less of it in the world today, and certainly the natural world would not hold up to this standard. My definition of beauty is a transcendental quality of raw expression, that has the potential to connect us to something greater than ourselves. Isn't this what we all feel, when we are captivated by a compelling piece of art, or gaze upon the graceful form of a sculpted woman? Aren't we as equally moved by those things that stir deeper, more complex feelings, that reflect an artist's turmoil and pain? Any stimulus that so powerfully unleashes our emotional energy, whether negative or positive, allows us to access our own inner world that we are often so unaware of. Likely, the more out of balance your dark side is,

the more you actively try to ignore it. It wants to be acknowledged, to be seen, to be loved for the role it plays in connecting you in emotion and experience to every other human being. It speaks to you of the beauty of life, which is like a double sided coin. With life there is always death. With pleasure, there is often pain. The day is always followed by night. By accepting your own dark side, and recognizing that *it is that which makes you beautiful*, you surrender to the experience of being alive.

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The next time you find yourself plummeting down a hole of despair, or paralyzed with fear or indecision, open yourself to fully embracing this place and seeing it as you would a work of art that deeply moves you. Not only is accepting your dark side a grounding practice, but it will exponentially increase the beauty you appreciate in everything, and everyone, around you.

[You are your feelings, or are you?](#)

Our feelings seem to be the stuff of life. They mark our biggest milestones, whether it's getting our first promotion,

giving birth, or experiencing the death of a loved one. Our feelings clue us into our lives and what action we want to take next. Without them, we would likely exist like a buoy in an ocean, bobbing up and down endlessly. Instead, our feelings infuse us with the energy of the waves, sometimes crashing violently onto the shore and at other times breaking like a gentle caress. Again and again, we feel the ups and downs in response to whatever Life is bringing to us in that moment. We feel emotion in response to what we are bringing to ourselves. Our feelings are how we know we are alive.

Sometimes we experience extremes of emotion that seem to take us over. Maybe it's that feeling of frustration at the child who won't stop crying, embarrassing us in a public place and drawing disapproving glances from those around. Or extreme bliss when we fall in love, which suddenly infuses us with the energy and creativity to accomplish long overdue projects. These extremes of emotion can often feel like in that one moment, the particular feeling is *who we are*. But that couldn't be further from the truth. You are not the emotion itself. Who you are, is the *experiencer* of the emotion, the intelligence behind it. Just as the ocean is not each wave crashing against the shore, you are not the emotion passing through you at any one point in time.

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It is important to understand this difference because the

implications can change your life. Once you understand that your feelings are merely a part of your energy moving through you, you can recognize that they are drawing your awareness inward for some purpose. The frustration at the child might be a sign that you have been neglecting your own needs. The utter bliss of falling in love can be an expression of deep gratitude for Life and a sense of connection with all beings. You can use your emotions as a roadmap to your intuitive self. When you feel a strong emotion, focus your awareness on it and the location it occupies within your physical body. This alone can be a transformative practice for many, but once you locate the emotion, become open to the message it is trying to communicate to you. Likely, it is acting as an invitation for your awareness to address unmet needs, or to connect more fully to the flow of life. And while your role as the experiencer is not to appease the individual emotions that may arise, it *is* to derive information so you can make conscious decisions about your life.

You will begin to notice that your emotions filter through you like little pieces of information. Truly, they are sensory signals from your body to foster awareness where there had been none. For this reason, our emotions are the greatest gift our soul has to offer us. It is a direct translation of an immaterial, metaphysical aspect of our existence into one that is concrete enough to allow our consciousness to rest on it for continued forward progress in our self-development.

You are not what you feel. But what you feel is the roadmap to being who you are. Each emotion that you experience, whether you label it negative or positive, is part of your soul's vocabulary that you must learn how to read in order to fully express your true, immaterial essence into your real, expressive self.
