



## What is Voice Dialogue?

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Voice Dialogue is a powerful transformational technique which expands your self-awareness and gives you more choice and balance within yourself and in your life. In essence, it makes you more fully conscious - of *all* the aspects of your humanity, be they spiritual, instinctual, materially focused, service-oriented, emotional, rational, parental and childlike.

The results are better relationships, increased self-acceptance and self-esteem, an ability to access more of the talents and abilities you have within you and a connection to your essential nature.

Voice Dialogue was developed by two American psychologists, Drs Hal and Sidra Stone, who teach and train people in this process world-wide. It is gradually becoming part of psychology and psychotherapy curriculums in universities and colleges and is also increasingly being used in all types of personal development and communication training.

Voice Dialogue and its underlying theoretical base, the Psychology of Selves and the Psychology of the Aware Ego, have their roots in Jungian psychology. The Stone's discovered that not only are our personalities made up of many different subpersonalities, or selves, which other psychological models accept too, but that these selves are *real*, with real needs, opinions, and perceptions about the world, and that it is possible to dialogue with these selves and to unhook from being totally identified with them. By unhooking from the selves that have been part of your identity, you make space for another aspect of consciousness called the Aware Ego. The Aware Ego is a process where your usual ego becomes aware of itself, or rather of the selves that are a part of it, and is then able to *choose* which selves to express, rather than have the selves choose for you.

Starting an Aware Ego process is an incredibly empowering and freeing experience as it enables you to unhook from and stand between opposite parts of your psyche, and not be identified with either of them. The choices that are opened up for you in such a state are real choices as you are not being carried along with the beliefs and rules of a particular self.

Voice Dialogue is an experiential technique which involves having a facilitator engage in a dialogue directly with the various parts of your psyche. The aim is to discover which parts of your psyche you have been identified with, to gain awareness of these parts and of how they have been affecting you and your life, and then to separate yourself from these parts so that you can start to be in charge rather than having one of your selves or subpersonalities being the decision-maker. So the facilitator can ask to speak with your Inner Critic, your Perfectionist, your Pleaser, your Responsible Parent or whichever self or selves you are identified with. After you have separated from the selves in you who have been 'you' (called primary selves), and you have what is now a more Aware Ego from which to make your decisions from, you can meet the many other aspects of you psyche which you might not have had access to before.

So if you have been feeling that you are not expressing yourself fully, or that one part of your personality is dominating your life — maybe your Perfectionistic Self, your Doing Self, your Caring Self, your Lazy Self or your Critic/Judge — you can get in touch with the relevant self and find out why it is acting as it does. When you have a good understanding of it and are no longer completely identified with it, you can access an opposite of that self which has probably been suppressed for a long time and is dying to have a voice. When you become aware (or conscious) of what is going on in your psyche, you can then take responsibility for your feelings and actions. You have

*choice*, rather than being compelled to act and feel in a particular way.

The goal with Voice Dialogue is develop your awareness, which is the part of consciousness that is not attached to the selves within you but can witness them all non-judgmentally, and then use this new awareness to help you embrace all the selves within you, enabling your more Aware Ego to start to drive your 'psychological car'.

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