



## Short Communication

### Beneath the Noise: Remembering Who You Are

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#### Introduction

As a psychologist, I've come to see that true transformation isn't about becoming more, it's about becoming less. Less burdened by the roles we perform, the expectations we chase, the noise we internalize. Life begins in simplicity, in presence but over time, we accumulate identities, fears, ambitions, and attachments. We wear these layers for so long that we forget we were ever anything beneath them.

And then, life happens. Not in the way we planned but in the way that humbles. For me, it arrived through loss. One by one, I watched those closest to me leave this world far too soon. No textbook prepares you for that kind of emptiness. I wasn't just grieving their absence I was grieving the parts of myself that only existed because they were here. The roles, the routines, the sense of place all unraveled.

It was in that unraveling that I discovered a truth that no training had ever taught me, you can lose everything and still not be lost. Because beneath grief, beneath the silence, beneath the noise, someone remains. And that someone isn't who the world asked you to be. It is who you've always quietly been. This echoes what Bonanno (2004) describes as the human capacity for resilience, the ability to not only endure loss, but to emerge with a clearer sense of identity [2].

As a psychologist, I've long spoken about self-awareness, presence, emotional resilience but in those still, aching hours, they were no longer concepts. They became breath. They became survival. I began to witness how fragile everything is not just our relationships, but even our sense of self. And I began to ask, "What is truly mine?"

Over time, I came to realize that even this body even this name is temporary. Everything we identify with on the surface will eventually fade. But beyond all of that, there is something that remains: the quiet awareness that observes it all. That steady, silent presence is who I truly am. And the process of healing, I've come to understand, is really the process of remembering that truth. Kabat-Zinn (1994) beautifully refers to this as the practice of mindfulness being with what is, without needing to change or fix it, allowing healing to emerge through presence [6].

There comes a quiet moment in life unseen by the world, unannounced when we stop striving to become something and begin to allow ourselves to simply be. Real growth doesn't arrive with noise or applause. It doesn't come from chasing perfection or performing for approval. It begins when

we stop running. When we finally slow down enough to feel what we've long avoided. When we sit beside our grief, our anger, our tenderness not to fix or change them, but simply to listen. Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson (1999), in their work on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, remind us that emotional healing begins not with resistance but with allowing and creating space for what is painful without judgment [5].

This doesn't mean you stop working or doing what you love. It simply means you stop using action or behavior to escape being who you are. You continue to live, create, and contribute but from a place that feels more honest, more rooted, more whole.

Self-awareness is not a skill. It is a way of being. Goleman (1995) notes that self-awareness, as a core aspect of emotional intelligence, is not just knowing what we feel, but recognizing how those emotions shape our thoughts, decisions, and identity [4]. Emotional awareness becomes the doorway to the willingness to feel what is true, not what is comfortable. We are taught to push away our discomforts to fix, numb, explain, or bypass them. But emotions are not problems. They are signals. And they do not need to be silent. They need to be seen.

Imagine yourself as a garden. You were never barren only overgrown. The weeds fear, shame, old stories, inherited expectations may have filled the space. But underneath, the soil is alive. Self-awareness is the light that reveals what needs clearing, what longs to bloom, and what is quietly waiting for your attention.

In a world that glorifies doing, we forget how to simply be. We race toward success, but forget to ask, 'Success by whose definition?' We climb ladders, only to realize they leaned against the wrong wall. Even if you win the race, what if it was never your race to begin with? It is not about becoming someone else it is about returning to who you were before the world told you who to be. The instant you choose rest over proving. It is in these micro-moments that your true self begins to surface.

And if you are walking through loss, loneliness, or profound change let me tell you this, you are not alone, you are not broken. You are being refined. And though it may feel like everything is falling apart, perhaps what is really happening is that what no longer belongs is falling away.

If you're wondering how to start applying this in your daily life, here are a few simple and practical practices to help you reconnect with yourself.

They are not meant to fix you. You are not broken. These are just ways to listen more deeply, live more gently, and return more fully to the truth of who you are beneath the noise.

### Daily Inner Check-In

Take 5 quiet minutes each day. Ask, 'What am I feeling? What do I need right now?' Listen without filtering, judging or criticizing.

### Let One Thing Go

Each week, release something a belief, a habit that no longer serves the self you're becoming. Let it go, even if it's just in awareness.

### Sit with Silence

Be still. Not to do, not to solve just to be. Let silence be a companion, not a threat. As Kabat-Zinn (1994) teaches, this stillness is where awareness deepens, and healing begins.

### Write What You Cannot Say

Journal the emotions that are too complex or too sacred to speak aloud. Pennebaker and Chung (2011) found that expressive writing helps individuals make sense of emotional experiences, reducing stress and deepening self-understanding [7].

### Spend Time in Nature

Take a walk in the park, sit quietly in a garden, or water your plants. Let these small moments in nature bring you back to yourself and the present moment. Nature connection has been shown to reduce anxiety and improve attention [1].

### Practice Acceptance with a Grounding Ritual

When discomfort, grief, or fear arises, pause and gently place your hand on your heart. Take a slow, deep breath and remind yourself, "This too belongs to me." Not because it's easy, but because it's part of your human experience. You can also write this phrase in a journal, reflect on it in silence, or keep it somewhere visible to remind yourself that you don't have to reject what you feel you can include it [5].

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In the end, when everything else falls away the titles, the noise, the striving what remains is clarity. What remains is presence. What remains is the self that has endured, evolved, and remembered its own strength.

You don't need to become someone else to be worthy. The strength you've been searching for isn't out there, it's already within you, waiting to be reclaimed. When the noise fades and the striving ends, what remains is power, presence, and the quiet truth of who you've always been."

As Brené Brown (2010) writes, worthiness is not something we earn through perfection, it is a birthright reclaimed through courage, authenticity, and self-compassion [3].

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