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ESSENCE IS THE PURE unconditioned nature of who we are—the purest fiber of our being. It is more fundamental and intrinsic than our personality. Essence is that which cannot be reduced or removed. It is always present, always available, and always rising in us. It is a permanent abiding presence. Its basic quality is its existence as an ontological actuality, a suchness. Essence is the pure and authentic presence of our being. Its presence is its primary action. Essence is our true nature. It is being without the distortion of our personal history.

- Essence isn't alive—it is aliveness.*
- Essence isn't aware—it is awareness.*
- Essence isn't loving—it is love.*
- Essence isn't being true—it is truth.*

PERSONALITY VS. TRUTH

When essence expresses itself into our lives on a personal level, it manifests as various experiential qualities that are

(essence)

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There is an essential core being that exists beneath/within the overlay of the personality, the very presence of which needs to be acknowledged and revealed to the psyche. The goal is for the person/personality to become infused with its own essential nature and to become familiar with the experience of its presence and live life with this conscious awareness.

clearly discernible, such as the warmth of compassion, the sweetness of love, the stillness of peace, the solidity of will and fire of strength. These qualities (and others), in their purest form, are our potential. They are the essential qualities of our being. However, even though essence and the essential qualities are always there and available to us, as we live through

life's experiences and become wounded in various ways, we end up abandoning them and losing awareness of their presence. We forget how to access them.

When we lose contact with the experience and presence of our essence and its essential qualities, we literally feel a hole or emptiness or deficiency in ourselves. Most often this is frightening and painful. One of the characteristics of the ego/personality is that it feels it must compensate for this loss. It feels it must and can substitute for it. There is a certain kind of ego pride in its/our ability to “do this for ourselves,” and it does its best to provide what is needed to ease the pain and fill the hole of deficiency. The ego feels it can create its own strength, its own love, its own security—whatever it needs. However, the compensations

that it uses only mimic the essential qualities, and rather than originating from essence, they are rooted in a defensive avoidance of life's pain.

Each time that people compensate for an essential quality, they are actually distancing themselves from the experience of their essential nature and from the truth of who they truly are. Living our lives and identifying ourselves solely as a personality relegates us to live within the confines of the nature of the personality, which can be a deficient hole, vacant of authentic existence. The kind of person we "try" to be to compensate for our lack is not who we truly are.

Essence is a presence that exists purely as itself. It has nothing to do with the identifications and compensations of the personality. However, it is very important to know that the flow of essence into our lives is structured and experienced by either the spin of our "personality" or by the recognition of our essential Being. It is who we think we are, what we identify with, that influences the quality of our experience of essence as it flows into our life and whether we are even aware of its presence. If we are strongly identified with our personality, we won't easily recognize essence and its qualities when it presents to us. As we awaken to this knowing, we are free to become aware of the subtle realms of self/Self and discover more of who we are. We can inquire further into what comprises us, our personality, our essential core, and open to the experience of the complexity of our Being.

The beauty of our individual consciousness and uniqueness, the means through which Being manifests and experiences itself, blossoms forth. As this integration takes place, there is a manifestation of the qualities of a personal essence: autonomy, competence, respect, dignity, integrity, excellence, maturity, harmony, completeness. This is our birthright. [And] as we learn to recognize essence and its qualities, it's helpful to know what it is not.

Essence is not energy. It is the source of energy and its presence frees/activates our energy (i.e., kundalini, chi, prana). It also activates our nervous and other physical systems, but it is not the discharge or the emotion.

Essence is not a feeling. It is experienced as a "felt-sense" that is different from a feeling (i.e., you might feel your fingers, but the feeling is not your fingers). Also, it is important not to get caught in the trap of pursuing positive emotions and mistaking them for essence.

Essence is not an image. The presence of essence stimulates our minds to produce profound images that are very meaningful to us and our process; however, to focus on

the image as the desired end is missing the image's source.

RECLAIMING ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE

What do we do to reconnect to the experience of our essential nature and qualities of being? How do we proceed? First, we work on the personality, softening the structures of the psyche that have been created by the ego. As we do that, we create "space" for essence to rise into our experience and awareness. Essence can be very subtle as it comes into our experience, so we must develop a new sensitivity to the subtle levels of being. To do this, we must become quiet and present to the moment, present to the now, present to the truth of whatever we are experiencing in the moment. Truth is dynamic, and as we stay with the truth of whatever we are experiencing, it shifts and changes, revealing further truth. As we continue to stay with this dynamic unfolding, we are involved in a profound alchemical process that is actually metabolizing and softening the structure of the psyche and healing what needs to be healed. It is elegant and precise.

This process may be uncomfortable; however, as we stay with it, eventually we come to an experience of calm, quiet, openness. It is extremely important to stay with the truth of this experience as well—for this is when essence returns and reveals itself to us once again. It is subtle, yet pure and profound—a felt sense of a discernible quality that is returning to you. Whatever essential quality returns to your experience is the very one that you were forced to abandon as a child. As you stay with your essential experience and allow it to fill you completely, you are being healed in a deep way. Little by little, your experience of the return of essence will reveal your true identity, the purest fiber of your Being, your essential nature. The many qualities of essence, like facets of a diamond, are remembered rather than learned. It is the return of essence that, in the end, fulfills us. 🌍

—Excerpted from "Essence, Grace, and Healing," *Subtle Energies & Energy Medicine*, 15:1 (2004); www.issseem.org, email Issseem2@comcast.net.

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