

Gems from the Guide

236 In Midlife and Feeling “Great,” BUT am I “Awake”? (L96)

In this quote from L96 *Questions and Answers and Additional Comments on Laziness as Symptom of Self-Alienation*, the Guide speaks about the **difference between** growing up, on the one hand, very identified as “**successful**” **in the eyes of oneself** and in the eyes of the **culture one grew up in**, even “**successful**” **on all fronts**: physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, **and**, on the other hand, developing and identifying ever more closely with the **real self** through a lifelong program of honest self-facing, purification, and transformation, such as Pathwork.

(See also these paragraphs of L96 on **pages 30 - 35 of the Devotional Format**:
<https://www.garyvollbracht.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/L096GaryDevotional.pdf>)

- 33** QUESTION: About self-alienation: Say a young girl has an image of how she would like to be as an adult, which is superimposed. Then, as time goes on, she really grows into this ideal picture. Then, when one works on the path, one no longer knows what is this ideal picture and what is the real self. There is a confusion because part of oneself has grown into this ideal picture, so it is very hard to differentiate between the real self and the superimposed self.
- 34** ANSWER: It is not necessary that you approach this decision by asking yourself which is which, because as long as you ask this question, your real self is nowhere around. Once it does come out, there will be no doubt. One of its outstanding characteristics is absolute certainty. When I say absolute certainty, that, of course, does not apply to life. Many people have the wrong concept of maturity because they believe if they were mature, they would always be certain. That, of course, is not true, for life is not always secure and certain. The mature person will accept life's uncertainty and cope with it. The immature person will not. As far as you are concerned, what matters is what you want, think, feel, as well as how you experience others and yourself, concepts, ideas and convictions. It is here that you will have certainty -- not necessarily that your experience is right, but that it is truly you. Until you have reached this state, do not trouble yourself to distinguish with your intellect between the real and the superimposed self. It is a question of feeling and experiencing yourself in relationship to others, to the world, to life, and to yourself. Rather ask yourself: "Why do I feel this way? Why do I want what I want? What productive effect does it have on others and on myself? What unproductive or even destructive effect does it have on others and myself? If it is not genuine, what are the destructive effects?" Ask yourself the motivations of this ideal picture, which might very well be your idealized self-image.