



Voice Dialogue Terms

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Voice Dialogue has a unique set of terms. Understanding these definitions will help you acclimate to this new way of thinking about yourself.

Voice Dialogue: An experiential method that lets you give voice to certain aspects of your personality, one at a time, so you can know yourself better and make changes in your life, while feeling centered and balanced in the midst of your own complexity.

Psychology of the Aware Ego: This theory has been developed by Drs. Hal and Sidra Stone to psychologically support the Voice Dialogue method.

Inner Selves: These make up the wholeness of your psyche. They can either be conscious or unconscious. Everyone has a collection of inner selves that they use in the various experiences of living their life.

Primary Selves: These are the inner selves that you are conscious of and most closely identified with. They are who you think you are when you say “I”. Your early family relationships and social experiences mixed with your genetic temperament are what form these selves in the first place. They help you get your needs met so you can feel secure and effective in the world.

Disowned Selves: These are the inner selves that you have actively pushed down or have never developed in your life yet. Since they often live in your unconscious, you can forget or never realize that they are within you. Sometimes they show up as positive (admiration) or negative (judgment) projections onto others. They can also show up as characters in your dreams or as primary selves in your partner.

Opposites: This refers to any pair of inner selves that have opposing viewpoints and energy systems, like Being & Doing, Rational Mind & Body Sensuality and Procrastinator & Finisher. When you meet two opposing selves in a Voice Dialogue session, you activate an Aware Ego process that can hold the tension of their opposite energies and allow you to stay connected to both.

Aware Ego Process: When you talk from a self and develop your ability to be separate from it, you begin an Aware Ego process. This becomes a capacity to hold the dynamic tension between your different inner selves. Living within an Aware Ego process allows you to take all of your various inner needs into consideration as you live in the moment and plan for your future.

Awareness: Awareness is an ability to observe life, including your own, with some perspective rather than being in the thick of it all. From this non-attached vantage-point, you can dispassionately notice what “is” without judgment or emotion.

Energy: Each self has a specific “energetic” and when you are in a self, you can feel it through body sensations. With awareness and an Aware Ego process, you can associate a particular energy with the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of a particular inner self.

Vulnerability: Vulnerability refers to the needs within each of us. As a baby, toddler, child and adolescent, you relied upon others to take care of your vulnerability needs. As an adult, you can learn to consciously take care of these needs with your own self-care and with your ability to ask for what you need from other, and to make life choices that support your own needs.

Positive Bonding: In a Positive Bonding Pattern, you unconsciously let your vulnerability needs be taken care of by the other person, rather than by your own self-care. “I’m taking care of you, and you’re taking care of me”. It is named “positive” because we associate it with feeling good. In this pattern, you are minimizing differences and maximizing agreements.

Negative Bonding: In a Negative Bonding Pattern, your unconscious vulnerability is not being taken care of at all, by you or by the other person, and so it triggers the shift from a positive bonding to negative bonding. “Neither of us is being taken care of by the other and we’re angry about that because we’ve come to yearn for or expect it.” It is named “negative” because we associate it with feeling badly. This is often what is happening when we have a fight with someone. It can make us feel destabilized and insecure.

Linkage: Linkage refers to having an energetic connection between two people. When we learn to link energetically with choice and awareness, we feel each other, and a soul connection is made.

Personal Energy: Inner selves can be Personal in nature. This means they offer an openness that helps you feel energetically connected to another person or to your environment. When your Primary Self-System is Personal, your heart is open and you like the feeling of being fully connected. But since you're not energetically protected, your feelings can be easily hurt and you can feel drained after being with people. To recharge, you usually need to withdraw to recoup your energy.

Impersonal Energy: Inner selves can also be Impersonal in nature. This means they offer you a guardedness that helps you feel energetically protected when you are interacting with another person or with your environment. When your Primary Self-System is Impersonal, you experience less energetic merging and more separateness with boundaries. When channeled through an Aware Ego Process, you will feel energetically linked without feeling unprotected or energetically drained.