

Becoming Your True Self

Releasing Potential through Faith

Based on a paper by Dan Jordan

Learning about the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'í Class – True Self1

Becoming Your True Self

People are longing to become, as Bahá'u'lláh said, fully noble, rather than remain imprisoned and put down. The Faith helps a human being to become transformed into his true self by releasing his human potential.

What do you think is your human potential?

What kind of person would you like to be?

What are you good at?

Do you have physical qualities? Social
qualities? Intellectual qualities? Spiritual
qualities?

Becoming Your True Self

Conscious knowledge of what is happening to you during that process helps to protect the gains and enables you to identify and accept, often through painful experiences, opportunities for further growth.

Youth is a time of growth and development.

Can you think of tests and difficulties that have helped you to become better at something?

Becoming Your True Self

Feeling yourself becoming the best of what you can potentially be brings the highest joy. It promotes a sense of self-worth, and guarantees a loving social conscience — all requirements for world unity and peace.

When you accomplish something difficult,
how does it feel?

How do you feel when you help others?

Do you want to work for world unity and
peace?

The Nature of Human Potential

Bahá'u'lláh teaches that the highest expression of the self is servitude, being of service. The degree to which this can be achieved is determined by how your basic powers or capacities can be released.

The Nature of Human Potential

The process of becoming one's true self means developing basic capacities and dedicating them to the service of humanity.

Do you enjoy being of service to others?

The Nature of Human Potential

The daily decisions and actions which reflect this "becoming" are essentially religious in nature, for Bahá'u'lláh equates work of all kinds performed in a spirit of service — in the spirit of that highest station of man — with worship.

Did you know that work in a spirit of service
is worship?

Just like prayer, it helps you to grow
spiritually.

The Nature of Human Potential

What are these capacities? Bahá'u'lláh identifies them in His statement of the purpose behind man's creation: **to know and to love God**. Here the two basic powers or capacities of knowing and loving are clearly specified and linked to our purpose — our reason for being.

The Nature of Human Potential

Thus, for a Bahá'í, becoming your true self means the development of your knowing and loving capacities in service to mankind.

The Nature of Human Potential

All other virtues can be understood as expressions of different combinations of these basic capacities of loving and knowing as they are applied in different situations.

The loving capacity includes not only the ability to love but also the ability to be loved — to attract love. We cannot have lovers without loved ones.

Think of some people, in your family or outside, whom you love and who love you.

The Nature of Human Potential

The knowing capacity also includes a knowledge of how to learn and how to teach. Teaching and learning are complementary aspects of the knowing capacity. No teacher is a good teacher who cannot learn from his pupils, and no good pupil fails to question his teacher so that both teacher and pupil learn.

What are some ways in which you know how to learn?

Have you experienced the pleasure of teaching something to others?

The Nature of Human Potential

Each capacity supports and facilitates the development of the other. In order to know, for instance, we must love learning; if we are to love, we must know how to love and how to be loved.

The Nature of Human Potential

These two capacities constitute the basic nature of human potential. From a Bahá'í point of view, true education refers to developing your potential to the fullest extent possible.

Does this help you to understand what true education is?

Is there any end to receiving true education?

Faith Releasing Human Potential

The basic source of the power for transformation is the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Reading His Writings develops faith, required for transformation.

What is the difference between the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and normal text?

Faith Releasing Human Potential

Faith refers to an attitude towards the unknown or unknowable which ultimately enables you to approach it in a way that something more of it becomes known. In essence, faith means loving the unknown or unknowable — an attraction to whatever is unknown and a capacity to approach it.

Is it easy to think about the unknown or unknowable?

Faith Releasing Human Potential

Since, as Bahá'u'lláh says, God is unknowable, it takes faith to become attracted and related to Him. Faith is one important expression of our **purpose**, which is **to know and to love God**.

Faith Releasing Human Potential

*In *The Hidden Words*, Bahá'u'lláh says, "O Son of Man! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty."*

*(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, #3 Arabic)*

Do you see why love is so important?
Should we not do everything to bring more
love into the world?

Faith Releasing Human Potential

He also tells us it is not easy to love and to pray to the unknowable: *“Ye shall be hindered from loving Me and souls shall be perturbed as they make mention of Me. For minds cannot grasp Me nor hearts contain Me.”*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, #66 Arabic)

Faith Releasing Human Potential

Further, if God is unknowable and if we are created in His image, then we may expect something in ourselves also to be unknown. This unknown is the not-yet expressed potential within us, hidden gems, undeveloped capacities for knowing and loving.

How does it feel to have unknown potential
within you?

Do you want to discover more of your own
potential?

Faith Releasing Human Potential

None of us knows his capacity for love or how much he can learn. Just as we had to have faith before we could learn about the attributes of God, so must we have faith before we can know something of ourselves.

Faith Releasing Human Potential

We must love — be attracted to — that unknown in our own selves if it is to be released. If we relate satisfactorily to the unknown in ourselves, we will be able to relate to the unknown in others. In other words, we have to accept others not only for what they presently are but also for what they can become.

Think of your family, friends and others that you meet. They all must have potential to become even better. Will it help if you love them even more?

Faith Releasing Human Potential

Bahá'u'lláh in *The Hidden Words* states, "O Son of Being! Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant."

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, #5 Arabic)

Faith Releasing Human Potential

In this verse, God commands, through His Manifestation, that we love Him and accept Him in spite of the fact that he is unknowable. Being attracted to the unknowable is the essence of faith.

