

Chapter 1 - Who Am I?

“When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds: Your mind transcends limitations... and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be.”

§ Patanjali (1st to 3rd century B.C.) § 1

When people look at me today they see an educated, intelligent, professional woman with a successful and prestigious career. They also see an honest, down to earth lady who acts rather casual, likes to dance and have fun. I carry myself as an open person with a practical outlook on life and life situations. I have mastered this outward appearance very well. However, those who have known me for some years can tell when this facade fails by the sadness they can see deep within my eyes.

A month ago I saw a friend from my past. During our animated and magnetic conversation, he said he was enamored with my smile. My heart pounded as I heard these sweet words because I had never forgotten our first brief meeting some five years earlier. I still felt the warm attraction to him and his entrancing smile. He said, “You had the saddest eyes I had ever seen. The sadness dominated your aura but when you smiled it seemed to light up the whole room!” He added, “Now I see this light in you and all around you, your smile is entrancing.” His observations made a huge impression on me because another longtime friend said the very same thing to me a few days earlier. She called me “the lady with the sad eyes.” *I thought to myself, five years ago I didn't know how to put on my false face well. But NOW I am the master of disguise!* Then her next words surprised me as she said, “Celeste, I can always tell when things are not going well with you because that same look fills your eyes.” This was the look I wore during the worst periods of my life. I would have to work harder at perfecting my disguise to ensure the "safety" of my heart.

For the most part, people around me only saw the successful and professional woman calmly walking through life. My disguise was convincing most of the time. I had learned not only how to put on a false face, but how to keep people from getting too close to me. Once I let a person come close, my shield dissolved and the invincibility I portrayed vanished. In my mind I

then became vulnerable and could be easily wounded. Have you ever felt vulnerable and unprotected like me?

In years past, the inner voice I heard screaming with the false mantra, “*I am not good enough*” and, “*I do not fit in*” vibrated through my entire inner being with mind, body, and spirit. These words would overcome me when I was at a party, a conference, or social gathering where there were people I did not know. It whispered ever so softly but with the force of a sharp sword that the things it said were true and I believed it each and every time! The fear would rise through the pit of my stomach into my heart and dominate my spirit and mind as I believed those untrue words and held them tight as truth. Have you heard your inner voices? Did you believe them like I did?

I am a woman with a big kind heart—my dominant quality. I have come to realize that this heart quality is a grand blessing from our Creator. I am able to forgive more easily, let go of anger more readily, and keep resentment away from me. The kindness has kept bitterness and resentment from tearing into my life and destroying my very soul.

I am a woman with emotional, physical, sexual, and spiritual needs just like you. But my needs have been ignored, hidden, and disguised by me for most of my life. I have become the great wizard with a chameleon-like appearance, convincing all those around me that my needs are nonexistent, or at least second to their own. I have become a superwoman, totally independent, needing no one.

I am a child full of fears, insecurities, and untruths—learned early in life and buried deep within me. This inner child cries out my untrue mantras that were learned as early as five years old. Dee Dee, my inner child, has controlled my actions in the most intimate relationships throughout my life. Then, with her magician-like quality, she hides deep inside me and erases her existence from my mind, like a child hiding from some mistake they made in fear of punishment.

I am a mother in every sense of the word—a caretaker, provider, sounding board, nurturer, and loyal supporter of my children and those I love. I have multiple roles as a mother including stern disciplinarian, companion, mild-hearted aide, and confidant. I have a hand that is outstretched to help my children in their times of need, never turning down their cries for help, no matter how old they have become.

I am a friend to those close to me. I open my heart and we let our souls intertwine like a mass of tangled string clinging together. I choose my friends carefully and am more satisfied with fewer, rather than too many.

I am a Warrior Queen, carrying the scars from battles I have encountered. The scars from spousal abuse, decades of severed family relationships, unfulfilled love, and a broken heart were weaved together to form my warrior shield.

I am an intellectual not in the common sense of the word. I study concepts to expand my mind, spirit, and soul. I am wise through the life experiences I have gathered throughout these years lived here on earth.

I am a magnet attracting truth seeking people, kind hearted people, and people with character just like you.

I am an accomplished professional as evidenced by my trade, a creative woman as seen from my art and surroundings, a wearer of many hats—smart with good common street-sense. I am an optimist choosing to believe in the good of all mankind. I am a child holding onto my Heavenly Father's hand. I am a positive force attracting those with hearts like mine...I am me!