

## MEDIA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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**Your book delivers new perspectives to help us move into more illuminated levels of consciousness. What is the authentic life you speak of?**

The path to an authentic life is the one Dr. Jung called Individuation. It is a life based on growth of consciousness and self-awareness. It begins with our quest to grow into an adult identity that is capable of functioning in society and in relationships in a self-responsible way. This foundation supports our search for a life that is truly authentic. This means we begin to develop the insight or consciousness that frees us from the web of influences that have shaped our personalities.

**What is the difference between “sickly selfishness” and “sacred selfishness”?**

In the opening paragraphs of the book, I define sickly selfishness as egotistical, self-centered behavior that is demanding and exploitative of others. On the other hand, sacred selfishness is just the opposite. It means making the commitment to become a person of depth, and substance whose very presence brings life vitality to the people around them. Sacred selfishness is based on self-knowledge, giving us the foundation to truly love ourselves, our lives, and other people.

**Why is it so difficult for people to learn how to love themselves?**

We are all brought up in a culture that teaches us to find quick relief from any fear or discomfort rather than looking for a deeper experience of life and emotions. In addition, we are indoctrinated into certain mind-sets that define what makes up a good life and a successful person. I followed these paths and, as I showed in my book they didn't work for me. My change began when I was forced to look inside myself, to discover the feelings and other parts of me I had denied and what they were trying to tell me. I found out that I couldn't love someone I didn't know, especially if that person is me.

**Why is it that people can love others and simultaneously lose themselves?**

Until we learn how to give ourselves the unconditional love, affirmation, and support we need, we will end up trying to get our needs met through others. In an effort to do this we will do whatever we can to meet their needs until we are exhausted. Then we tend to get angry and resentful or simply give up just to keep the peace. If we love another person and have the foundation of self-love, then the love we give and the love that is returned is a gift. If it becomes destructive or diminishing in any way, we are able to create a boundary and protect our inner dignity.

**Like many people, you found yourself in a mid-life crisis by the time you hit your 30's, even though by outward appearances, you seemed to be living the American dream.**

**What does this trend mean and how did it affect you?**

We tend to take on society's image of the "successful life" in an effort to solve our problems and achieve a state of fulfillment. The work and family image that I was seeking was diminishing my spirit and building a backlog of depression. I found that striving for self-knowledge, learning the value of my feelings, and listening to myself began a journey into work I could love, and into relationships where I could be loving authentically.

**How can our creative pursuits help using our quest for self-knowledge?**

Our concern with being productive, with not appearing to be suffering or struggling or vulnerable has caused us to cut off immense portions of our inner selves. We can reconnect with these aspects of ourselves through creative outlets such as writing, singing, dancing, and painting. It helps to give voice to our wholeness, our humanity, and to better understand the depth of our experiences.

**You talk about challenging the assumptions we have about ourselves. Can you explain why we would want to do this?**

We are indoctrinated into certain perspectives and mind-sets that define what makes up a good life and a successful person. Our families, schools, churches, jobs, friends, traditions, and the media combine to define normalcy and to teach us to live by these standards rather than learning to seek for our unique truth or to believe the messages sent by our own experience. Once we reach adulthood, spiritual and psychological maturity doesn't come naturally. We have to pursue knowing ourselves better in order to love more deeply and live in a more satisfying manner.

**What are the keys to living a more fulfilling life or a life of substance?**

Inner substance is a term that Ralph Waldo Emerson referred to as "character"- a reserved force that acts directly by presence and without means. You can spot it easily when you see someone that is grounded, comfortable in life, and that gives a sense of integrity in what they say and do.

The key to living a fulfilling life of substance is the committed path to self-awareness. It is the only way I know of, the way outlined by philosophers and mystics throughout the centuries, that brings us the power to live in a balanced, fulfilling way and the capacity to deal honestly, thoughtfully and lovingly with each other.

**As a Jungian Analyst, you have undoubtedly counseled plenty of educated, affluent and engaging individuals. Why were they questioning their lives and feeling unhappy or unfulfilled?**

I have treated many people who felt their own lives and identities were slipping away. They found that they had lost themselves in their jobs, business or social obligations, or in their partner. They are beginning to question their lives because they are realizing, whether it's brought on by a depression, illness, divorce, just a general feeling of restlessness or unhappiness, that their lives aren't bringing them the sense of meaning, love, and joy that they expected.

### **How can we benefit on the path of sacred selfishness from following the methods of dialoging and journaling?**

Journaling is a method of inner exploration that helps us know ourselves more completely. Dialoging, which I prefer to write as part of my journal, sets up a field in the imagination where we can discover and bring into relationship parts of ourselves we don't understand, know little about, and often fear. I explain this process in great detail in the book and give many examples of people dialoging with such things as fear, anger, creativity, depression, and dream figures. This gives us some separation from these aspects of ourselves, makes it harder for some of them to take us over and helps us understand what caused them and what purpose they've served in our lives.

### **How does dream analysis assist us on the path of sacred selfishness?**

Dreams reflect an inner awareness of our reality and of how we are handling life and our personal development. Particularly, the things we don't have the time or inclination to process into full conscious awareness. And, they are a rich source for gaining access to our creative potentials. I like to write my dreams down and take the time to reflect on them and savor them. By this I mean first letting the scenes, people, events and story lines sink in and enrich my experience.

### **How do we prepare to choose the path of self-awareness?**

The best way we can prepare for change is by knowing more about ourselves. People who are trapped in their identities and ideas of how life should be fear change. The path of sacred selfishness, individuation and growth in self-knowledge, brings hope because it leads us into a path of development that goes beyond normal. We need to ask ourselves: What kind of future am I creating? Is it one that will lead to a richer life, filled with love and satisfaction?

### **Why is it such a struggle to have a loving relationship of substance? What are we doing wrong?**

We are all struggling with our relationships today. Part of it comes from the fact that we're going through an era of transitions. The old models have broken down and the new ones are still evolving. We also live longer and have higher expectations of them than people did in the past. We expect love, affirmation, sexuality, and safety on the one hand, but our anger, rage, alienation and frustrations are also acted out in them. In a period of cultural changes, relationships have less societal support and personal roles are also in transition. In such a case our personal journey into consciousness becomes even more important. Our journey into self-love and self-knowledge becomes the foundation for healthy, life-enhancing relationships.