

You are the flowing water

Here's an analogy to help you understand the many levels of who you are: Imagine a rushing stream of water flowing along the riverbanks. In one area, you see piles of rocks that have created a diversion in the water's flow. As you look at this area, you notice the shape of a whirlpool that has been formed by the water rushing across this pattern of rocks.

To an objective eye, the whirlpool shape created by the water flowing around the rocks may appear to be a solid object. To someone who doesn't understand the dynamics of flowing water, this whirlpool shape may appear to be the same water from one moment to another. However, those who understand what is really going on know that this seemingly stable pattern is constantly being animated by fresh flowing water.

The rocks in this riverbed are like all the outer circumstances of your life that have created certain flows and shapes in your character and awareness. The whirlpool shape created by these rocks is like the part of you that others can see — all the appearances and behaviors that make you similar to or different from others.

Nevertheless, spirituality says that what you really are is the flowing water. Your deepest essence is neither the rocks nor the shape of movement, but the fresh stream of divine life force and Holy Spirit that streams through the circumstances of your life, creating this image of you.

In this analogy, what you identify with says a lot about how you experience life:

- **Identifying with the rocks** in the stream is akin to identifying with present situations and past memories, such as what you own, what you've done, or your childhood experiences of having too much of one thing or too little of the other. Focusing on the rocks is like having a materialistic point of view that may lead you to struggle endlessly to rearrange the rocks with hopes of creating changes in the water's shape.
- **Identifying with the whirlpool shape** is also a lower road to go. If you think the personality shape created by the rock circumstances of your life is you, well, then where will you be when those rocks come tumbling down one day? If the whirlpool dissolves or changes, you may actually think you've died!
- **If you identify instead with the flowing water** — with the spiritual energy that invigorates and gives life to the body, mind, heart, and soul of every being that emerges out of the spring of life — then you know a great and wonderful freedom. Even if all the rocks fall down and even if the shapes of water patterns change a million times, you remain identified with the ceaseless flow of water that's unaffected by shifts in the riverbed.

Consider

The truth is that you're really all three — the rocks, the patterns of water flow, and the water.