



The Witness, by Ram Dass

George Gurdjieff, a Russian philosopher-mystic noted that if you set an alarm clock at night in order to get up early to get some work done, who you are in the morning when the alarm goes off is quite different from who you were the night before. In the morning you might even say, "Who the %(*@! set that alarm clock?" A moment's reflection will show you that you play many roles in the course of a day ... and that WHO YOU ARE from moment to moment changes. There is the angry

you, and the kind you, the lazy you, the lustful you -- hundreds of different you's. Gurdjieff points out that sometimes one "you" does something for which all the other "you's" must pay for years or possibly for the rest of this life. Each of these "you's" reflects an identification with a desire, or a feeling, or a thought. If, as we have seen, the work is to break these identifications, we can WORK effectively throughout each day by making each of these "you's" objects, i.e., by breaking the identification with each of them. This is not so easy. [...] There is one technique which is known as adopting the role of the witness -- and holding onto that role -- ultimately, to the exclusion of all roles. [...] The witness is not evaluative. It does not judge your actions. It merely notes them. [...] This point is important. Most of the time the inner voices of most people are continually evaluative. "I'm good for doing this" or "I'm bad for doing that." You must make that evaluative role an object of contemplation as well. Keep in mind that the witness does not care whether you become enlightened or not. It merely notes how it all is. -- Ram Daas, in "Be Here Now"