Reality Poses No Danger, by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Things that are real pose no danger to the mind. The real dangers in the mind are our delusions, the things we make up, the things we use to cover up reality, the stories, the preconceived notions we impose on things. When we're trying to live in those stories and notions, reality is threatening. It's always exposing the cracks in our ideas, the cracks in our ignorance, the cracks in our desires. As long as we identify with those make-believe desires, we find that threatening. But if we learn to become real people ourselves, then reality poses no dangers.

This is what the meditation is for, teaching yourself how to be real, to get in touch with what's really going on, to look at your sense of who you are and take it apart in terms of what it really is, to look at the things that you find threatening in your life and see what they really are. When you really look, you see the truth. If you're true in your looking, the truth appears. [...]

Truth is a quality of the mind that doesn't depend on figuring things out or being clever. It depends on having integrity in your actions and in your powers of observation, accepting the truth as it is. It means accepting the fact that you play a role in shaping that truth, so you have to be responsible. You have to be sensitive both to what you're doing and to the results you get, so that you can learn to be more and more skillful.

Many people think that self-acceptance means celebrating what's there already: that you're good enough, that you don't have to make any changes. That's not the case at all.

Acceptance means accepting the fact that you're responsible for a lot of your experience right now. You can't blame anybody else. And ultimately that's a good thing. If other people were ultimately responsible for shaping your experience, what could you do? You'd have to go around pleasing them all the time. But the key fact is that you're shaping your pleasures and pains here in the present moment. Some of your experience comes from past actions, but a lot comes from the way you shape things with each present intention.

So learn to be open and honest about the role you're playing in this moment.

--Thanissaro Bhikkhu, from "_Meditations 3_"