

Polarity Integration - description

When you're in a situation where there are seemingly conflicting needs that must be met, the psyche will divide itself into two perspectives or "sub-personalities" in order to accommodate this complex reality. This is a polarity.

For example, if you feel a need to be authentically yourself but also a need to feel safe in an emotionally unsafe environment, consciousness can split and send the aspect with the need for authenticity into the unconscious, leaving the aspect with a need for safety in a protective role of behaving in ways that mask your authentic thoughts and feelings. These two parts can develop antagonistic feelings toward one other, increasing the resistance between them as the polarity amplifies over time.

You know you're experiencing a polarity when you feel torn between two perspectives within yourself. This can manifest as an experience of bouncing back and forth between two choices that seem mutually exclusive; "should I stay in this relationship or leave?" "Should I go for that promotion, or stay where I am?" "Should I do what makes me happy or what's best for my partner or my children?" "Should I express my true feelings or appease others?"

It feels like a "zero sum game" or a "no-win" situation. There's a temptation to sacrifice your needs on one side of the polarity for the sake of your needs on the other but as soon as you take action on behalf of one side, the other strongly objects and you can't move forward. You bounce back and forth between these two perspectives and there's never a feeling of resolution. This can feel like inner conflict, ambivalence, confusion, or even paralysis.

A polarity is a strategy the psyche uses to find resolution in a seemingly no-win scenario. Since the original state of consciousness is one of wholeness, these two perspectives that have now distinguished themselves as "sub-personalities" were originally one and the same. This means that they actually share the same needs, and it's our job to work with them, learn from them, and understand them well enough to find their shared common ground.

The challenge is that as these perspectives become polarized and they no longer have access to the opposite perspective, let alone the big picture. They don't understand your experience as the person who is experiencing them. This exercise opens a three way dialog between you in order to reach understanding and resolution so that integration can take place.

Remember, consciousness is always seeking to return to oneness. Once you open a pathway, these two parts will be drawn to each other like magnets. During a recent polarity integration session, a client said to Mark; "This work wants to happen, and so it does."

Polarity Examples

Example #1: You feel torn about whether or not to end a relationship. Neither of you are getting your needs met and there's been a lot of conflict and hurt feelings. One part of you knows you need to leave and is feeling resolved that the best thing for both of you is to go your separate ways. However, every time you think of leaving, another part of you resists. You wonder if you've really done everything you can to preserve the relationship, whether another approach or strategy would salvage things between you. Have you really tried everything? You go back and forth between these perspectives and even though you're exhausted, you can't seem to commit to a course of action. You feel paralyzed and unable to move. All you want is clarity but the more you consider your options the more confused you feel. You feel torn between your desire for repair and connection with this person and your desire to leave a situation that doesn't meet your needs.

Example #2: You want to start a business based on a creative passion you've had for years. You want to be responsible and stay at your day job in order to provide security for yourself while your business is getting off the ground. It's the smart and sensible thing to do and you feel confident you're doing the right thing. On the other hand, you seem to be having a harder and harder time getting out of bed to go to your day job. You feel burned out, tired, uninspired, and resentful that you have to compromise your values to make a living. You want to push this new business to support you and feel impatient to get it going. You keep bouncing back and forth and slip into despair, believing you'll never be able to make the transition to your new career. You begin to feel like a failure because you can no longer force yourself to do the responsible thing and continue to support your creative project a little longer. You feel torn between your desire to be practical and sensible and the creative call of your soul.

Example #3: You're an introverted person who struggles with social anxiety. You usually prefer being alone but have been feeling more and more lonely recently. You want to reach out to connect with people and at the same time you feel anxious and afraid of people's judgments. You have trouble trusting others and feel sensitive and worried about their opinions of you. You go back and forth between wanting to soothe your loneliness with connection while also feeling terrified to reach out to others. Both parts feel so much pain and despair as their needs continue to go unmet. You feel so torn and ashamed and you don't know what to do.