

If we are going to discover ourselves: what is the best way to do that? Do we go to counseling; hike a mountain and become one with nature; or do we go on a spiritual pilgrimage? What do you think it takes to discover yourself? Maybe you think you already know. I hope you do, but if there is a little voice inside that has questions, it's time to listen a little harder. Inside each of us is an inner voice, and it is always talking to us. Some people ignore it as just thoughts that are strange like a dream. Others embrace it and people think they are nuts. Those people express their inner voice with their outer voice: that might be a bad combination. It is equally bad to ignore the voice all together.

Sigmund Freud and others made careers out of examining that little voice. What is it saying? Those men and women in the psychiatry field love to look at your inner child. They believe the voice is connected to that little boy or girl you once were. I for one agree with them. From our earliest days I believe the voice has always been talking to us. Some say it is just our neurotic side talking, but I say it is God. God made us and imprinted on our hearts His thoughts about each one of you. It comes to us in a form of a little voice.

When we buy some gizmo, the product most of the time, comes with instructions. If we write something like a book we make a glossary or an index so people can understand the book better. Why do we do that? I believe it's because we know that instructions help. A list like an index, glossary, or instructions can be very important. We need them to find out what we need to know and where it is found. The voice inside is like an index or glossary. God has given us instructions. Some people say "God told me to do it." That is not what I am talking about. The instructions I am leaning towards tell you about who you are not what to do.

When I was younger I dreamed of becoming a music producer. I loved finding, playing, and listening to good music. I was also a writer. As I have grown up I never pursued either of

those things. I believe it denied me a fun future of being who I was supposed to be. Ask yourself what is your bag? What gets your juices flowing? Do you like adventure or math? Basically what do you like the most in life? The voice inside has been telling you since you were born who you were meant to be.

When I was single after 33 years old, I was thrust into a different world. Women wanted to know me but each one wanted just a part of me. Some parts they loved and some they rejected, and that was very confusing let me tell you. A friend of mine challenged me to discover myself first. Ok I thought, but don't I know myself already? She said I didn't really and could prove it. Was I willing to let her prove to me I did not know myself? Ok, I took her challenge. In reality God wanted me to listen to my little voice for the first time.

My friend asked me to go to a movie alone and date myself (deeper thoughts on this topic in chapter 7). She said that the problem has always been that I went to things with someone other than myself. I know that sounded strange but as I thought about it: it was true. How many people take themselves to a movie, especially men? I bet not too many. We love company. When you go by yourself, you only have you to listen to (if you are listening). I know there are times we wish we never listened to ourselves, but learning to trust ourselves in all situations is liberating.

After a movie or dinner a couple tells each other what they thought and how the date went. When were alone, we tend to not do that enough. In dating myself, I had to ask myself what I thought and what I liked. It made me see myself as I had never before. I had an opinion, and yes, it mattered to me.

The instructions God gave us are those things that make us more like who we are supposed to be. I like good stories; I like good food; and I like a great adventure: that is part of me. Have you ever thought "I'd like to do that." However, in your busy life you never went

there. From childhood to adulthood, we would love to climb a tree but never do. We get lost in life, and never really do what our voice inside is telling us. I had a friend who said he always wanted to climb Mt Everest, yet he married, had kids, and never climbed that dream. He ignored his inner voice that said “this is who you are”: a mountain climber? It’s more than that. He is a risk taker, a nature lover, and a physical man. These days he is just a husband and a dad that hasn’t reached his true potential.

Some say that being a husband and dad is a fine life. What’s wrong with that? What’s wrong is that we are more than just titles and roles. I found out through my divorce that I was more than I thought. The reason my “ex” divorced me is because she was more than a mother and wife. Both of us we not reaching our potential, and that killed our marriage. It’s much more than just saying “be satisfied where you are.” We are more than that. How do you know Patrick? Because, that little voice (if were listening) says I like climbing, I like swimming, I like chocolate. It says so because you were built to like it.

Some people like country music, and don’t listen to Rock and Roll. It’s no different with the things we dream of. Imagine someone loving country but listening to Black Sabbath, it wouldn’t work. That person would be unhappy. It’s the same with our little voice. Being just a dad and husband is not “just fine” when we were built for more. I have heard countless stories of people who always dreamed of being the career they work in, and equally I have witnessed the opposite.

The voice inside defines you. You are more than a worker, husband, or hockey player. The problems we run into are based on defining ourselves by what we like to do. Sometimes we are defined by what we do and not what makes us happy. Happy is a dangerous place because it can be false or real. A new CD can make us happy for a day. A realization that we are

adventurous, funny and easy going can make us happy too. We become way too comfortable in our own skin. Have you met someone who seems spunky (an out of the box thinker). Yet, they are a housewife or postal worker. Maybe they are a spunky postal worker? My point is that the spunky part is transferable to many things they can do. Remember that your Job can be the sustainer for what you were really meant to do.

Gary Sinise is a Hollywood actor. In his spare time he plays in a band for fun. He is not musical in his Hollywood job. Doug Flutie is a undersized Quarterback that made the most of his abilities. In his spare time he loves basketball and playing in a band. These men and others are known for one thing they do very well, but behind the scenes they are so much more. That spunkiness part of their lives is transfers all over the place in movie roles, football plays and in a bar cranking out inspiring music. We are more than we appear to be. The voice says express your nature all over this globe.

My single life for 5 years was hard and enlightening all at the same time. I forced myself to learn about me. I read a book called "I kissed dating goodbye" by Joshua Harris. He realized that the best Joshua made the best husband and father. He went on a journey to make himself the best Joshua he could be. He began to listen to the little voice. What made him Joshua? Once he knew that answer: he loved being the man God made him to be; it made him a great husband and father. It was the same for me. Those 5 years made me rediscover what the voice had been saying all along. Patrick you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

For my first 33 years I thought I knew me. I thought for such a long time that what I did not know about myself did not matter. My life was just floating along like a leaf in the wind. My person was being made, cooked, or constructed as life went on. To some degree that is true, but there were instructions on how to get there and I wasn't listening. God had given me a little

voice inside just like he has given you. My voice said you can write, you love people, you love adventure, and so much more. For 33 years it did not seem to matter. Once I was on my own again outside of marriage, oh yes it mattered. One woman said cook for me while another said ride a motorcycle. Did I like cooking or Harleys? My inner voice knew but I didn't.

Over time I have been trained by God to listen to my voice. It says I don't like Harley's. It also says I love to cook. I love football, hiking, travel, and God. All of those things barely mattered in my first 33 years. I was shy and embarrassed to ask to do them. Today they are demanded of me. They are part of what makes me (the whole me). The real man inside me came through the process of self-discovery. Maybe it's time you discovered yourself too. My new wife knows who I am because I do what is me. I do what is her too, but it's important to her that I be me.

I explained all this because in my dad's basement I thought I had lost it all. God said "now that I have your attention, will you listen to my instructions for you." It was time to make Patrick Green for the first time. I am the guy before 33, but today I'm a better version. It's like Windows Dos for the first computers with the basic Dos prompt "c:/." That's where we start but today I am windows 8 (with all the bugs too). I make time to grow me. I think that makes me a better husband and father.

In some ways I ripped my first wife off. She never had the chance to experience the real me. It must have been hard to be married to a mindless shell of a man. It seems harsh but it's true. I did what she wanted, and I worked and worked. That's all I was to her. In our divorce she said "he was never there for us." that hurt so bad in the moment, but in time, I realized that it was very true. All my family knew was that I worked somewhere and lived at their house. They never knew me. I also never took the time to know them.

ABBA sings a song “knowing me and knowing you.” Look up the lyrics and you can see my prior life. That song was written because people are more than they tend to be. You are ripping off yourself, God, and others if you ignore that little voice inside. Be more than you see, and more than you know. When people say God has a plan for you, many tend to roll their eyes. “oh ya” that’s going to church, being a husband and father like a good little Christian? Yes it is and so much more. The plan is bigger and better than you know.

Who made you? Some say molecules while others say aliens. There are some that say this alien being called God made you. He imprinted himself upon your heart. The reason I believe that is because each of us is different. No two people are exactly alike. Twins look alike and share the same traits but even their mother knows they are different. Don’t you find it strange that each person has two of this and the same one of that, but we are all very different mentally? I call the voice inside “God.” He has imprinted instructions about who you are supposed to be.

Look at your life this way. In the Christian world we believe that when we die we go on to live with God for eternity. Forever is a very long time. I hope we like each other or it could be hell. How about looking at eternity this way? To know God is to “need” eternity to discover him. It would take that long to know God. We need a lifetime to know ourselves too. We are so much more than just a father, brother, or husband. We are more than a worker or a quarterback. The plan of God is to know your-self better. Inside that, you will know God better too.

We hear that divorce rates are over 60% these days: why? For 2nd marriages the stats are even higher: why? I believe it’s because we fail to listen to who we were meant to be. It’s not about getting rid of a spouse and trying another relationship or job. I like my ex’s new husband he is cool. Funny enough he is somewhat like me. She is different than she was before: why? It is because she began to discover herself outside of marriage. I am convinced that divorce is not the

answer. Becoming who we were built to be is. I believe that my ex and I are now closer to who we were supposed to be more than ever before. Does that mean we should be together now? Sometimes things must die or burn up in flames before we see the real thing. That is what happened to us.

If you find yourself single or you think you are in a bad marriage, please take a step back. Things might not be as bad as they seem to be. Maybe tinkering with you and how you listen is the answer. Maybe encouraging a spouse to discover themselves is better than letting them wallow in life. If we listen to our spouses, they are saying a lot about themselves. A single person has friends. I know a lady who wants to be single. That is great but even single people get in a rut. There is a time to radically change your life. Some people move, quit a job, or even quit a marriage. Sometimes all we really needed is to step back and breathe. Take some time to look in the mirror and be still: listen.

I know someone who insists that women are their problem. They love drugs and have a hard time staying in one place with one job. Are women really to blame for their troubles? I know people that blame others for their problems. People can be hard and influential on people. I was told once “what a man allows happens.” Maybe what a woman allows happens too. People do bad things to people. That is life. It’s how we let those experiences control us that counts.

When I went through divorce I had to smoke. For nine months it owned me. I loved those times walking and smoking. One day I realized that I might never get myself back and quit smoking. I had to face the stress and hurt without a crutch. I quit smoking and drinking (for different reasons). I had to own “me” beyond the things that subdued stress and hurt in my heart. My friend found solace in women, drugs, and parties. I know that deep down inside it only

masks the real problems he has. It always comes down to owning the trouble rather than blaming.

Listening to that special voice of God will help you discover that you can overcome pain, trouble, disappointment, and many other problems. **1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has seized you that isn’t common for people. But God is faithful. He won’t allow you to be tempted beyond your abilities. Instead, with the temptation, God will also supply a way out so that you will be able to endure it.** There is a way through. Blame just prolongs pain. The voice inside you wants to make you stronger.

Each one of us is wired to be something special. One person is great at sports while another loves writing. It’s time to look at the things you always wanted to be and do them. That is who you really are. In a relationship we become one but we are still two people. A great relationship desires to see the other grow and become something special. We should not be threatened by change, growth, and success that your spouse attains. The answer does not lie in running away and discovering yourself. It comes from self-revelation and inspiring others to be all they can be.

Knowing yourself makes you strong. Men value themselves through other men. The affirmation from a woman can cause men to soar. Knowing how you tick is so important. To stand before your peers with pride and confidence in yourself is everything. We tend to call it arrogance but I call it being strong. In school I was challenged to know my beliefs and stand up for them. That was hard to do, but I know me now. I will defend me now. I am stronger because I believe in me like never before. With others I am a strong link compared to the weak link. Are you strong inside?

Mark 3:27 says: “In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house.” In the following chapters I hope to bring you along to realize that men are important. Your masculinity is very important: important to you and important to the world around you. A strong man is a benefit to you and others around you. When I first went to the Distress Centre I did not know that. A good woman pointed this out to me. She valued that I become strong. My journey can help your journey. **Proverbs 27:17 says “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”** It's time for your journey to begin.