

## Reclaiming Self

When we are born into this world we are innocent (in my belief system) and unfettered by protective patterns of behaviour. As we experience life, encounter pain of varying kinds, we learn to erect protections to keep us safe. These become increasingly complex as layer upon layer of protection is established in response to all that life throws at us. Each protection requires energy from us to support and maintain, and as a consequence robs us of our life force and capacity to freely respond to life. It is often a crisis that makes us aware of how our behaviours interfere with our ability to engage with life in a meaningful way. We may experience ourselves as “too...”, an indication that our internal Critic or Judge (or external, when heard from those around us) considers us as having wandered from appropriate expression. Examples include “too volatile”, “too reserved”, “too pleasing”, “too aggressive” and any number of other judgements, singularly or in combination. These behaviours, when the judgement has some merit, have typically been developed in response to our needs being unmet and us seeking to satisfy them to the point that the behaviours become patterns that are applied without conscious thought, long past their use by date.

In becoming aware of such behaviours, perhaps through the failure of relationships, difficulties fitting in, negative feedback from multiple sources etcetera, the question then arises ‘What should I do about me?’ The process then becomes a matter of reclaiming oneself and finding ways of freeing our life force, returning to a spontaneous,



*Children, relatively free of protective patterns of behaviour*

### Author

[Stephen Harrison](#) BSc (Hons), PMP, FPMINZ

### Abstract

*We are born unfettered by learned behaviours and protections we develop in response to our environment. These filter and distort our life force. Awareness of such blocks often arise from an existential crisis, that initiates a process of reclaiming self. This article identifies some of the key elements in this process.*

### Keywords

Appreciate the Fog, acceptance, behaviours, conscious living, learning, love, patterned behaviour, personal change, personal growth, personal transformation, positive self-image, purpose, reclaiming self, relationship with self

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creative and adaptive way of living, being better able to respond positively to the present.

In my own life this process started with a crisis of identity in my early 30s and has subsequently seen me free myself up and how I live and present myself to the world, an ongoing process. Earlier this year the surprise need for life-saving surgery plunged me into a whole new cycle of self-reclamation. The process of recovering from surgery required adapting to the loss of hearing in one ear, and developing physiological strategies to compensate for impairment in my balance processes. The physical recovery, while being a challenge, has been easier in many respects than the process of reclaiming my concept of self. In many respects it is as if the surgery sliced through significant protective mechanisms and unleashed old patterns of thought and feeling that I haven't seen since I was a teenager and that I found

particularly difficult in the first instance. Now, it is difficult seeing poor concepts of Self return, but at least they do so in an environment where I know I can process and work through them in a constructive fashion. In a sense, a very real sense, I'm back to dealing with old issues all over again. The reality however is that I am now working at a much deeper level, as if I have taken the head off and am cleaning out an infectious boil, rather than dealing with a superficial spot. While the issues are similar, feel very familiar, and are, I am better equipped to deal with this new level of emotional healing than I have been previously. The act of staying engaged with what arises within me, riding the wave as it forms rather than trying to escape it, will eventually lead to me being freer than ever before.

Some ways of engaging in the process of reclaiming Self include:

- develop capacity to identify and observe behaviours in yourself that do not fit well relative to how you would prefer to be and what would work best in your context
- develop love and acceptance of self that is free of needing to understand why you behave as

you do and that opens you up to being able to forgive yourself unconditionally

- define your core values, life purpose, vision and mission which will provide you with clarity about how you would prefer to live and present yourself to the world, something to aspire to
- establish goals for moving forward into new, more productive, behaviours
- find trusted individuals who are able to provide you with love, support, and constructive feedback
- recognise that life is an ongoing journey and while you may have a preference for where you end up, and how you behave, perfection is out of the question and any vision you hold is a guide rather than an edict that must be obeyed at all costs
- appreciate the fog that arises when life serves you growth opportunities, and allow that fog to water your life as rain does fertile soil

Through these approaches we can reclaim our lives, incrementally bring ourselves back to a fully free and available space to manifest our full, unfettered potential.

***For more information related to themes in this article, refer to:*** Harrison, S. G. (2012). [\*Appreciate the Fog: Embrace Change with Power and Purpose\*](#). Auckland, New Zealand: Xlibris Corporation.

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