

# Multiple Personalities: The Upside



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**M**ultiple personalities are essential for effective living. In a lawful society everyone is held accountable for their behavior as though they were a single personality all the time, unless the defense can demonstrate that the personality who committed the crime somehow took control of the perpetrator's unwilling mind. When I caught my 4-year-old son red-handed, drawing on the playroom wall, he looked at me and said with a perfectly straight face "*I'm not Paul!*" It didn't work for Paul and it hasn't worked for me, but you will recognize forms of this desperate argument everywhere if you look for it.

Clumsy attempts at fraud like this give multiple personalities a bad name, but they *are* essential for effective living. I recently activated one of my dormant personalities in order to complete a particularly knotty transaction that needed to be completed over the diverse objections of many difficult people. This personality of mine is an aggressive, goal oriented executive who moves the ball down the field despite whatever obstacles present themselves, even if they are people. He expects problems and relishes their resolution. He is flexible but implacable, reasonable but relentless. He gets it done but he *is* kind of an ass.

I wanted to be this guy in my thirties and forties, but not now. Now I choose to invoke a different constellation of personality features more suited to personal counseling, friendship, fatherhood, partnership and the gentle way of life. The idea of multiple personalities is a red herring because there is really no such thing as a personality in the first place. Personality is an enormous pallet of mental and endocrine functions, to which various templates can be applied more or less voluntarily. You can't change your basic pallet but you can reconfigure some of your mental and endocrine functions to better meet your changing needs, and you should. Trust me. Call me.

## ***Relief, Recovery, Resolution***

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