

## MIND ENCLOSURE

**"Thoughts are conversations we have with ourselves".**

**"My mind enclosure is the centre of my reality where everything makes sense or is nonsense".**

There are many sides to me, and I always have fascinating and enlightening conversations with myself. Within me, there are a variety of personalities, some of which are natural (born with them) and some of which are nurtured (those acquired over time). Some of these traits are very dominant and define me on a regular basis, while others are more subtle.

I have spent a lot of time wondering about who I am and I have come to realize that I am more like a group of individuals (or residents as I call them) residing within this dwelling I call myself and these residents have developed rules or patterns of communication that are either functional (when it helps me get the results that I want) or dysfunctional when it does the opposite.

In my mind enclosure (ME) that I now refer to as my house, I was able to clearly identify these individuals (about 7 of them). My thoughts or me talking to myself could now more accurately be described as me observing these individuals that make up me and describing their perspectives from the perspective of their personalities.

I love how I can describe each one of them based on the feelings they generate and convey. I am not describing a scenario in which the dominant personality constantly changes, and the individual describes a dissociative state. All the personalities in my house are always present and interacting, each one offering opinions, while the dominant personality speaks for everyone.

Because of my Yoruba cultural background, I liked the idea of the house. As a child, I was always taught that a house divided couldn't stand, and I realized the importance of peace and harmony. Peace and harmony in Yoruba culture meant people getting along well despite not liking each other.

In my house there are individuals that I don't particularly like, but it is important to realize that they are in fact me and have a right to live there, and even if they shouldn't speak for the house, their opinions are valuable and should be heard. When confronted with somewhat "shady" situations, I rely heavily on the opinions of "conniving T" (who can be very destructive if left unchecked and allowed to speak for the house). Fortunately, these opinions are expressed by "responsible T", who represents the house and that I reinforce on a regular basis.

The process I created is simply a way for me to understand myself better and resolve conflict, and there is nothing scientific about it. In the same way that yellow and blue are primary colors and mixing yellow and blue produces green, sometimes these individuals merge to form a hybrid. My house has developed over time, and I believe that there are primary residents that have been there from the start and others that have been created through the interactions of the primary residents (and sometimes secondary or tertiary residents). My reinforced experiences have created the hierarchy. While "Little T" doesn't talk much, his presence is always felt at every meeting.

Many hours have been spent wondering why I am who I am and if I was born with all these traits? Are the traits I already have reinforced, or do I develop new ones? In other words, can I adopt new residents and evict those I dislike? As of now, I believe that once a resident is within the house, it is impossible to evict them, and the focus should be on how to manage the house effectively.

It is true that I have residents in my house that I am not particularly proud of and some that are embarrassing, but there are others that I think are okay, but people around me seem unable to tolerate. My house has always been led by a dominant personality, and this is the one that people recognize as me. As I reinforce the attributes associated with this individual in me, this dominant resident or leader emerges.

There is a dominant personality or leader who speaks for the house (me). The leader is determined by reinforcing the trait so, for example, when I suffered from panic attacks and generalized anxiety disorder, the "fearful T" spoke for the house. By reinforcing the traits I wanted, "confident T" is now the dominant leader of the house, even though he still resides within me.

I realized that focusing on a trait I didn't want reinforced that trait, even though I intended it to be less dominant. By doing so, I inadvertently voted for it, so I now simply focus on the trait I want to reinforce and ignore the one I don't want.

Through careful observation I have gained a better understanding of my house rules.

1) Every resident has a place and has dignity, so it is imperative to accept them as they are (self-acceptance) while still choosing appropriate action that is likely to provide the results I want.

2) Every resident will be heard (self-awareness). This means that I will be aware of all the residents in the house irrespective of how I feel about them. Denial and avoidance of self may provide short-term relief but do not give me the long-term stability of self-love that I crave. I believe that self-awareness and self-acceptance equal self-love.

3) I recognize residents by the feelings they generate, and these feelings influence my actions.

4) The dominant resident/residents in the house are those whose attributes are most often repeated through expression or attempts at suppression. This is i.e. the one in whom most of my time and effort is invested in will become the leader.

5) The dominant resident/residents speak for the house and therefore interact with my external environment and are most recognizable as who I am.

I have come to realize that the most effective way to make decisions that result in functional outcomes is by being my own best friend.

### **Points to remember:**

Thoughts are the conversations you have with yourself.

How you have these conversations is critical.

Recognizing and accepting the different parts of you (the residents in your mind enclosure) is critical.