



Learning our True Name

Most fundamentally, who am I?

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” *Isaiah 43:1*



Questions for reflection:

- To what extent have your names, the ones given you at birth and the ones that you have been known by, defined you over your lifetime?
- Is there a name you have come to abide in comfortably?
- How do you recognise your own essence?
- In what way is your life speaking?
- Most fundamentally, who are you?

Reading material:

A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward and Undivided Live, by Parker Palmer

The Second Half of Life: Opening the Eight Gates of Wisdom, by Angeles Arrien

What is my true name?

Since ancient times, for most cultures, ‘naming’ is a sacred rite or part of an initiation ceremony. In still others, a person has three names: one given at birth; the one they are known by or called during their lives; and their real, true, or spirit name, one which is learned over time or given in a dream. With the naming comes a sense of identity and a feeling of harmony and unity within oneself; one that is identical with one’s true nature or essence.

Parker Palmer tells us that any authentic call ultimately comes from the voice of the teacher within, the voice that invites us to honour the nature of our true selves and encourages us to ‘let our life speak’: ‘Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we *ought* to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks - we will also find our path of authentic service in the world.’

Please call me by my true names
so I can wake up,
and so the door of my heart
can be left open,
the door of compassion.

Thich Nhat Hanh

*I live my life in widening circles
That reach out across the world.
I may not ever complete the last one,
But I give myself to it.
I circle around God, that primordial tower.
I have been circling for thousands of years,
And I still don't know: am I a falcon,
A storm, or a great song? [I, 2]*

Rainer Maria Rilke, Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God

If you want to identify me
Ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat,
Or how I comb my hair,
But ask me what I am living for, in detail,
Ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully
For the thing I want to live for. *Thomas Merton*

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