

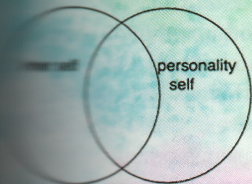
COHERENT SELF, COHERENT WORLD

by Diana Durham

Coherence means the quality of forming a unified whole. We experience coherence in relationship with a caring partner or close friend.

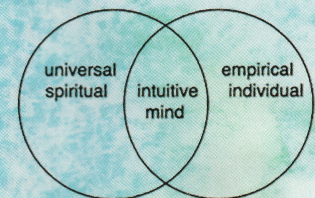
These relationships are balanced, reciprocal. We are each different individuals, but we have a sense of meaningful relatedness, one which nurtures and expands the fundamental sense of ourself. We feel part of a unified whole. We can also experience coherence when we walk through buildings that have been well-designed. We respond to the proportions of their physical space, and are able to find our way around with ease, feeling on both counts again a sense of meaningful relationship.

But the cornerstone of coherence is the experience of being a unified whole in our own right as individuals. This is a potential available to us because we have two aspects to our identity or two qualities of awareness. For simplicity's sake I refer to these two aspects as our inner self and our personality self:



Lama Anagarika Govinda, one of the earliest westerners to teach Buddhism spoke about the condition of what he termed 'intuitive mind', which he defined as the overlapping of the 'universal spiritual' and the 'empirical individual':

Intuitive mind can 'look both ways': it draws on the universal and the individual, the



inner and the outer. Part of what this means is we have a balanced approach to life – we 'weigh things up'. We are 'open-minded' yet at the same time we're not going to just swallow whole all that we are told.

But the experience of 'intuitive mind' also means we feel happy. A sense of well-being pervades us and the way we see things. This is because the inherent nature of our inner self is well-being. That may be where the phrase comes from because a hidden depth of presence is like a well, fed by underground springs; a sense of something that 'wells' up.

