Chapter 10:
Facets of the Soul

Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself. (I am large, I contain multitudes.)

> - Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*

And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

Mark 5:9

No conditions are permanent;
No conditions are reliable;
Nothing is self.

> - Buddha

The unsettling truth is that the self as object cannot be found anywhere.

> - Stephen Cope[1]

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1 From "Yoga and the Quest for the True Self," Bantam Books, 2009

Evolving Towards the Truth

On a pragmatic, everyday level, it sounds rather absurd to even question whether the self or the "I" exists. It may seem like a perfectly appropriate activity for some professor of philosophy to consider, as he paces about his personal library, wearing his smoking jacket and drinking cognac. However, from a more practical perspective of everyday life, when you've just banged your shin on the coffee table, the phone is ringing, and you're running late for work, it's painfully obvious that you exist. Even in less stressful settings it seems pretty obvious that someone is doing all the thinking, considering, deliberating, choosing and remembering.

If not "me," then who?

Furthermore, in one of the quotes I listed earlier for David Hume, he says,

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.

One might ask, how can he use the words "my" and "I," and then claim that he can't find his self"?

I think the basis for this confusion is the fact that word "self," as well as the related words I, me and myself, have numerous different meanings. We tend to use these words in different ways, referring to different aspects of the self. If we're going to make any progress in this matter, we need to be careful to clarify exactly what we mean when we talk about