



USUAL ME

**The Rants and Ramblings
of a Psychotherapist**

Geoffrey Windham

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Geoffrey Windham asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of
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Introduction

This book is about my way of being a therapist, and some of my beliefs and assumptions about what it means to be a human being. This is based solely and subjectively on Geoffrey Windham, the human I know best. I am not equipped to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I have often discussed what I should bring to therapy: boundaries, theories, training, experience, and the words and ideas I have read in the books I proudly display on my bookshelves, but all I can bring is my version of all this, my peculiar distortion of reality. Whatever intervention I make, whatever model I believe I am following, however elegant or clumsy I may be, it is Geoffrey in relation with another.

Sometimes a person needs stopping, sometimes starting. Sometimes a person needs warming up, sometimes cooling down, sometimes to be excited, sometimes to be calmed, sometimes to be tickled, and sometimes poked. Some people need space, some closeness, some need to learn to laugh, some to remember how to cry.

As well as hopefully discovering their patterns, and how they connect, and possibly to share that with my client, it is my job, as the therapist, to take care of the boundaries, to ensure they are known and transparent, to pay attention to their creation and maintenance, and to be as aware as I can be as to the when and how of my and my client's desires to break and stretch them.

Within this construction, I feel able to comment, silently and out loud, on the boundary's ebb and flow. I also feel able to comment on our way of being and behaviour, our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual demeanour, both the process and the content, as we too ebb away and flow towards each other.

Comments are intended to be clearly from where I am, encouraging the other person to comment on the world from their usual perspective, at the same time as knowing that there are other valid positions from which to view.

As we notice this, our definitions of self become apparent as a part of our relationship, not just at the boundary, at the edge, but in relation to the other. Two ends need a middle, a place not just to meet but to share. We can both notice this, but sometimes it takes a while to be translated by the brain into speech.

Can we recognise each other and ourselves as embodied human beings, fearful of our mortality, wary of each other, connected and defined by otherness?

Sharing and even celebrating the commonality of our humanity moves both of us through the familiar towards what we already knew but did not dare to admit. This is where the parallel lines meet, a by-product of speaking the language of intimacy.

Brentwood 2006



Gathering Reflections

I gather my reflections
To see who I'm supposed to be
I wrap my human stories round
The nothing in the middle of me.
Dear everybody, how are you all?
And do you really know me well?
You are the planets and the stars orbiting my life
Each one with our own tale to tell

Every little thing I do shows who I am
And a lot of a little is a lot
All the ghosts and the spirits of the future past
Keep reminding me of what I've got.
Is there a practical guide to life on planet earth?
Is there a point, a grand design, is there some goal?
A million billion bodies are miraculously here
Each one a faint mirror image of the whole

It's free here
But there's a life to pay
And time demands
It won't be any other way.
When the price seems too high
Like the plant is in the seed
Find your life within your soul
In that moment you'll be freed



Chapter One

Identities

Who is it?

It's only me.

Which me?

Which one of the multitude of contenders?

One of the mes that is me over here?

One of the mes that is you over there?

Usual mes rule the world that can be ruled.

We rule

by force,

by allowance,

by persuasion,

by temptation,

with love,

with fear,

with whatever works.

When I woke today I knew exactly how to be Geoffrey. I knew what Geoffrey does in the morning, what he has for breakfast, how he brushes his teeth, which shoe he puts on first. I knew the kinds of clothes he prefers to wear, what language he speaks and the kind of internal conversations he has with himself as well as the kinds of conversations he has with others.

In other words, I knew all Geoffrey's preferences, habits and routines. His well practised ways are rooted in genetic inheritance and physical body type, but mostly based on second hand bits of behaviour that he copied and adapted from others along the way for what seemed like a good reason at the time, usually with some survival value. Geoffrey is an expert at Geoffreyness.

Geoffrey's hopes and fears, his dreams and anxieties, his physical postures, his emotional attitudes, and his deeply held principles, are all set and in place, ready to be activated in reaction to the events of the day.

I call the conglomeration of these identity fragments "usual me". A whole made of parts is about as holistic as I can conceive. Usual me includes definitions such as ego, id and superego, adult, parent and child, and the gestalt topdog and underdog duality.

Usual me judges itself, its own identities, on a spectrum from real to false. Usual me judges the faces it shows to the world as false pretences masking the "real" identity which must not be shown. This is like an echo of its purpose. It is not whether these usual me identities are false or real as usual me would like us to believe, but how usual me distracts itself from enquiring as to who it is creating them. I call this who "true me".

True me is not an identity. Usual me *is* identity, the physical manifestation of true me. Usual me's job is to be like a shock absorber, to buffer true me from involvement in everyday life. Usual me's strategy to achieve this is to be the centre of its own attention.

It is like a computer having to put all its attention into solving an insoluble problem, with hardly any attention left for anything else. The other side of this is that when usual me is involved in this way and not looking, so to speak, it is possible to quietly slip away from the usual me world. This is how a mantra works.

Usual me is the way we relate in what Martin Buber named the I It world. In it world, usual me is a contracted object or event in a world of contracted objects and events, defined by what usual me is not. Usual me is a local phenomenon, measurable in time and space. Although we may be in close proximity geographically, we do not make personal contact, we are remote.

We may be familiar but we are not intimate. We are alienated by fear from each other and from the world, individually and in our various groupings. My experience of you, is my interpretation of you, is my objectification of you.....

Thank you and I invite you to buy the book to read the rest xxx