

# Living Humanity Awareness as a Teenager

A Humanity Awareness Handbook

## The Humanity Awareness Handbooks

This is the fourth in a series of handbooks to help people understand and live the principles that define the worldview of Humanity Awareness. Each handbook provides links to resources that support these principles.

Here is a list of the Humanity Awareness handbooks that are available to download:

1. Overview of Humanity Awareness
2. Living Humanity Awareness as a Parent
3. Living Humanity Awareness as a School Teacher
4. Living Humanity Awareness as a Teenager
5. Living Humanity Awareness as a Young Adult
6. Living Humanity Awareness as a Mature Adult
7. Living Humanity Awareness as a Change Agent
8. Living Humanity Awareness as a Leadership Trainer
9. Living Humanity Awareness as a Personal Coach
10. Living Humanity Awareness as a City Official
11. Living Humanity Awareness as a Business Leader
12. Living Humanity Awareness as a Political Leader
13. Living Humanity Awareness as a Steward of Wealth
14. Living the Cosmology of Humanity Awareness
15. Living Humanity Awareness in the Arts

These handbooks can be found on the Humanity Awareness Initiative website. In addition to reading this handbook, you may also be interested in reading the following handbooks:

- Overview of Humanity Awareness
- Living Humanity Awareness as a Young Adult

For more information, go to the [HAI website](#).

# Living Humanity Awareness as a Teenager

## 1. Who are you?

You are a unique expression of human potential. To fulfil that potential and experience as a teenager, you will need to find a group of people you can be friends with who share your values, appreciate who you are, and are kind to each other. These are people who will respect and trust you: they are people who can turn to for support and discuss anything troubling you without fear of judgment. Hopefully, this group of people also include your parents.

Everyone has two inner advisors to help them on their developmental journey – the Ego (this tends to be the fearful one) and the Soul or Higher Self (this is the wise one). They are both trying to look after what they believe are our best interests. The Ego tends to dominate our decision-making during the early years of our lives. Only when we learn to master the Ego's fears does the Soul step in to guide our decision-making. This can happen at any time, although for most people, it does not occur before we reach middle age.

The Ego operates from a position of "What's in it for me?" – a space of scarcity and fear. The Soul operates from a place of "What's best for the common good?" – a space of love and abundance.

Whenever you follow the advice of your Ego, you will generally find yourself experiencing emotions and feelings associated with fear, anger, stress, and sadness. You may experience highs, but they will generally be of short duration. You will feel a sense of misalignment whenever you let the fears of your Ego dictate your life.

Whenever you follow the guidance of your Higher Self, you will find yourself experiencing emotions and feelings associated with contentment, peace, joy, and wellbeing. You will feel a sense of alignment. You are your Soul (the wise one). You are not your Ego (the fearful one).

Your Soul has been with you from the moment of conception. Your Soul created the Ego to protect itself from the feeling of separation that it experiences being in our three-dimensional material world. The Soul lives in an energetic world.

The Ego takes its job seriously. By the time you reach your early twenties, your Ego has developed a set of beliefs about how to get your needs met inside the parental and cultural framework of your existence. These beliefs represent your outward personality – the mask you wear to survive, keep safe and feel secure in your framework of existence. What the Ego mostly focuses on is safety, protection, and self-esteem. It wants you to stay safe and look good in the eyes of others.

The Ego represents your false self. Beneath the ego mask lies your true/unique self – your Authentic Self. Your task, no matter what age you are, is to embrace your Authentic Self fully. This is what the Humanity Awareness Initiative is about – creating the conditions that allow people of all ages to engage in the process of self-realization.

## 2. Our most important needs

At any point in time, our most essential needs are determined by the stage of psychological development we have reached. As a teenager, you are at the third stage of development.

The first stage of development, **surviving**, occurs during the first two years of your life. At this stage of development, what is most important is to get your physiological needs met – food, shelter, warmth, and the attention of a parent or caregiver to your basic needs.

The second stage of development, **conforming**, occurs during the next six years of your life – from age two to around eight. At this stage of development, what is most important is to get your emotional needs met – safety, protection, love, and a sense of belonging.

The third stage of development, **differentiating**, occurs during the next 12 – 16 years of your life – during your teenage years. At this stage of development, what is most important is to get your security needs to be met – to find your place in society by establishing yourself in a caring community. You will primarily be focused on satisfying your needs for respect and recognition. You will seek recognition through achievement.

The overall purpose of the first three stages of development is to find your place in society and create a sense of identity. The identity you adopt will mainly depend on the country you live in, the level of education/status of your parents, the religious affiliations that your family embraces and your gender.

The personality you created during the first three stages of development is your ego identity. This is the identity that allowed you to get survival, safety and security needs to be met inside the parental and cultural framework of your existence. Your Ego is not who you are; it is the face you show to the world that aligns with the social norms and morals of your society. This is called your false self.

At the next stage of development, individuating stage, which occurs in your twenties and thirties, you will learn how to let go of the parts of your Ego that no longer serve you so you can become your true self. The true self is the person you were born to become. As you learn to let go of your false self and uncover your true self, you will also begin to catch glimpses of your unique self. Your unique self includes the gifts and talents you were born with that you learned to suppress during the first three stages of development so you could feel accepted by your community.

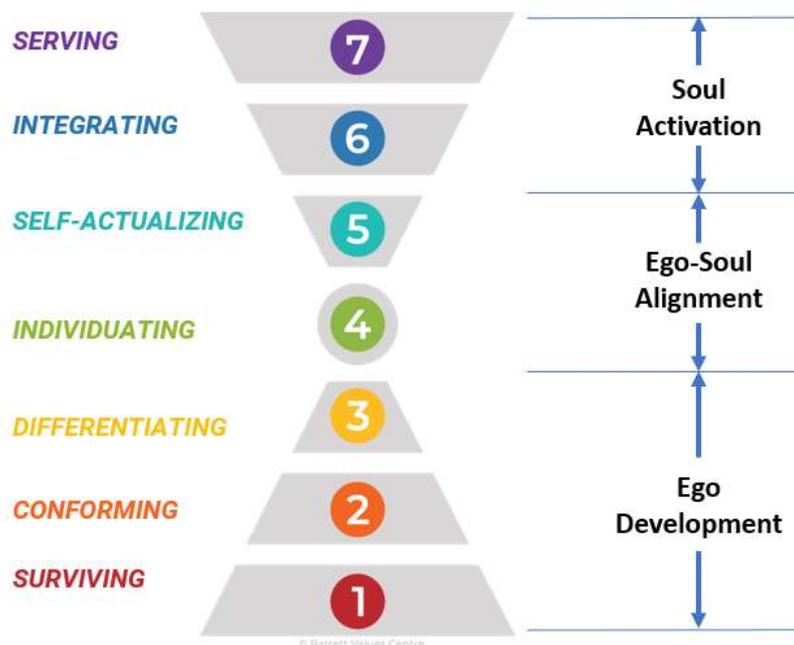
If you were fortunate enough to have been brought up in a liberal democracy by parents and teachers who nurtured your unique gifts and talents, you would discover your unique self will surface much earlier in your life. If you can do this, it will make your transition through the individuating and self-actualizing stages of development much smoother.

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The following table provides an overview of the needs associated with the seven stages of psychological development (the needs of the teenager are highlighted). This is known as the Barrett Model. You can find out more about the Barrett Model by clicking [this link](#).

Stages of psychological development	Age range	Motivation	Needs and desires	
			Internal	External
Serving	60+ years	Satisfying your need for self-less service.	Compassion	Contribution
Integrating	50–59 years	Satisfying your need to make a difference.	Empathy	Connection
Self-actualizing	40–49 years	Satisfying your need to find meaning and purpose.	Authenticity	Self-expression
Individuating	25–39 years	Satisfying your need for freedom and autonomy.	Responsibility	Accountability
Differentiating	8–24 years	Satisfying your need for respect and recognition.	Security	Achievement
Conforming	2–7 years	Satisfying your need for love and belonging.	Safety	Harmony
Surviving	Pre-birth to 2 years	Satisfying your need for physiological survival.	Survival	Health

There are three key phases of development in the Barrett Model – the growth and development of the Ego, the alignment of the Ego with the Soul, and the activation of Soul consciousness. These are shown in the following diagram.



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## **The growth and development of the Ego**

Between the moment you are born, and the time you reach physical maturity, around twenty years of age, you pass through three stages of psychological development - surviving, conforming, and differentiating. These stages are primarily driven by the biology of physical maturation and the socialization process.

By the end of the third stage of development, we are fully enculturated by the beliefs of our parents and the worldview of the community with which we identify. The upside of the process of enculturation is that it gives us a sense of identity – our place in the world – it teaches us to meet our survival, safety and security needs inside the physical and social framework of our existence. The downside of our enculturation is that it unknowingly forces us to hide our true self and our unique self. The face we show to the world is our false self.

## **The alignment of the Ego with the Soul**

The process of Ego-Soul alignment, the blending of the Ego with the Soul, normally starts in our twenties or thirties – at the individuating stage of psychological development – and continues through our forties in the self-actualizing stage of development.

We learn, during these two periods of development, to let go of our false self, embrace our true self, and explore our unique self. We begin to identify our gifts and talents and attach a sense of meaning and purpose to our lives that align with the motivations of our Higher Self.

Unlike the first three stages of psychological development, the individuating and self-actualizing stages of psychological development are not thrust upon us by the biological and societal exigencies of growing up. These stages of development are driven by the evolutionary impulses of our Higher Self.

Many people fail to respond to these impulses because they remain (unconsciously) focused on trying to satisfy the unmet needs of the first three stages of development. They feel, rightly or wrongly, that they were not sufficiently cared for by their parents or live in a repressive or authoritarian regime where freedom of expression is actively discouraged.

For some people, the process of Ego-Soul alignment can involve a significant shift in identity. If you do not feel aligned with the beliefs of your parents or the worldview of the community in which you were raised, you will begin to search for a new identity when you reach the individuating stage of development – one that is more in alignment with your true self. You will also adopt a different worldview.

This can create conflicts and challenges about how you relate to your parents, your childhood and teenage friends, and the people in your community. You may find yourself building new friendships with people who are in a similar situation as yourself – seeking to embrace their true self and explore their unique self.

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## The activation of the Soul

Having found your gifts and talents at the self-actualizing stage of development or earlier, you turn your attention at the integrating stage of development to use these gifts and talents to make a difference in your world. This usually occurs in your fifties. Your desire to make a difference at this stage of development is driven by your sense of empathy for others rather than your personal ambitions.

The joy you derive from living your purpose increases as you enter the serving stage of development and focus on contributing to the wellbeing of future generations and the planet through compassionate acts of service. This usually occurs in your sixties. At each stage of development, your sense of identity becomes more inclusive as you reach out to support others and alleviate their suffering.

This overview of the growth of human consciousness helps us to understand that personal fulfilment tends to occur after we have embraced our Authentic Self. Personal wellbeing, however, can occur at any age. We experience wellbeing when we have learned to master the needs of the stage of development we have reached.

It is noteworthy that there are increasing numbers of people who feel the connection and impulses of their Soul in their twenties and thirties. These people usually find it much easier to transition through the higher stages of personal development.

## 3. The three core principles for self-realization

There are three core principles for self-realization. You can learn these principles at any age. The three core principles are:

- Living a values-driven life
- Living a conscious life
- Living a purposeful life

Learning and practising these principles as a teenager or earlier will enable you to make a smooth transition through the individuating stage of development when you get to your twenties and thirties.

### Living a values-driven life

As we grow and develop through the stages of development, we naturally include and transcend six modes of decision-making – instincts, subconscious beliefs, conscious beliefs, values, intuition, and inspiration (for more information on the six modes of decision-making, click [this link](#)).

During the first three stages of development, which represent our baby years, our childhood years, and our teenage years, we usually use our instincts, subconscious beliefs, and conscious beliefs to make sense of what is happening around us and decide what we need to do to get our needs met. During the later stages of psychological development, we lean on our values, intuition, and inspiration to make our decisions.



The most critical transition in decision-making is from belief-based decision-making to values-based decision-making. The reason why this is important is that decisions based on beliefs tend to separate people, whereas decisions based on values tend to unite people because values-based decisions come from the heart.

The key questions you must ask when you make the shift to values-based decision-making are, "What is important to me?" And "What do I value?" This is where you learn to turn to the wise one (the Soul) rather than the fearful one (the Ego) for guidance.

It is much easier for groups of people from different backgrounds to agree on a common set of values than on a common set of beliefs. Therefore, to build a more connected world now and in the future, we need to teach our children and teenagers how to make values-based decisions as early as possible in their lives. We need to give them an ethical vocabulary.

You can start to learn about values-based decision-making by exploring your own values. One of the best ways doing this is to take this free [Personal Values Assessment](#). More than 1.5 million people have benefited from this assessment. The assessment is available in multiple languages.

Living in alignment with your values enables you to live with integrity and authenticity; it helps you to embrace your true self. For more information on living a values-driven life, click [this link](#).

## Living a conscious life

We become conscious when we begin to distinguish our own thoughts, opinions, and values from the beliefs of the groups we identify with. We discover who we are; we become responsible and accountable for our lives, and we begin to make choices based on our most deeply held values and motivations.

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Developing conscious awareness is a three-stage process:

1. Becoming aware of how your actions and behaviours impact your relationships and the natural world.
2. Becoming aware of how your thoughts, beliefs and values impact your mental, emotional, and physical health.
3. Caring about the impact your actions and behaviours have on others and the natural world and caring about the effect your thoughts and beliefs have on your mental, emotional, and physical health.

Most people conform to the ideas, norms and beliefs of their family, culture, and society. Their sense of self is determined by external validation. They lead a dependent life and hide their true self from the world. They live their lives unconsciously according to their parental and cultural conditioning.



The skills required for becoming conscious can be learned at any age. However, they become vitally important at the individuating stage of development. Unless you have developed these skills you cannot go beyond the differentiating stage of development. The key questions we must ask to live a conscious life are, "Who am I?" And "How can I consciously evolve?"

If you are not taught to be conscious early in life, then the process of becoming conscious is usually triggered by repeated emotional upsets or bouts of anxiety, depression, or mental distress.

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The key to becoming conscious is realizing we have a choice about how to live our lives. As you become more aware of how your thoughts and beliefs influence your actions, and you choose to let go or reframe the beliefs that do not serve you, your living conditions will change. Most importantly, you will begin to see your relationships improving. You will experience the joy and contentment of living in alignment with who you are.

The three keys to becoming conscious are cultivating presence, accessing your inner witness, and letting go of the beliefs that cause separation in your life. You cultivate presence by connecting to your true self. This is who you really are under the layers of all your conditioning. You access your inner witness through practising mindfulness. You let go of the beliefs that cause separation by embracing forgiveness and compassion. For more information on becoming conscious, listen to [this podcast](#).

## Living a purposeful life

At the level of the true self, we are all alike – we all have similar human needs and desires. At the level of the unique self, we are all different – we all have our gifts and talents. To find wellbeing and fulfilment in your life you must discover your gifts and talents and live a purposeful life. This requires you to:

1. Embrace your self-expression – discover and develop your unique gifts and talents.
2. Connect with others in empathic relationships.
3. Contribute to the wellbeing of others.

Self-expression becomes vitally important for our wellbeing at the self-actualizing stage of development. It helps us to give a sense of meaning to our lives. Connection becomes vitally important for our wellbeing at the integrating stage of development. It helps us to build loving and selfless relationships. Contribution at a community or society level becomes vitally important for our wellbeing at the serving stage of development. It helps us to find our place in society. The critical question we must ask to lead a purposeful life is, "How can I use my gifts and talents to make a difference in people's lives?"



You can begin to live a purposeful life at any age. What is essential for our collective future as a species is to teach our children how to self-express, connect and contribute as early as possible in their lives. Not only will this facilitate their fulfilment, it will also accelerate the possibility of creating a world where everyone can thrive.

## 4. Your multi-generational impact

Although it is too soon to think too much about it when you are a teenager, one day you are likely to become a parent. Just as your parents influenced your life, so you will influence your children's lives, and your children will influence the lives of their children. In other words, you will have a multi-generational impact on society.

With this responsibility in mind, you need to focus on your own self-realization as soon as possible in your life so you can become a role model for your future children.

You may find it helpful, now you have read about living humanity awareness as a teenager, to read the Humanity Awareness approach to lifelong learning by [clicking this link](#).

If you want to dig deeper into understanding how the Ego and Soul interact, read [this book](#).