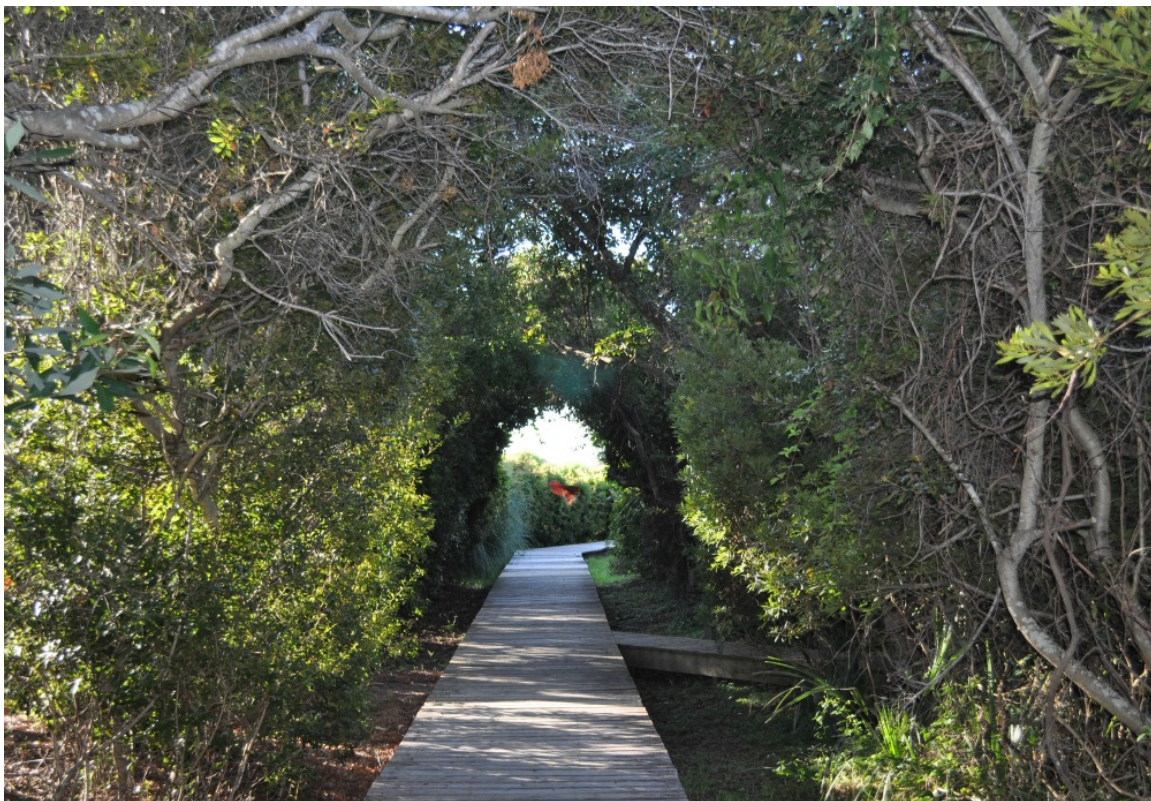


New Life:
A Blueprint for Healthy Relating
Based on
The Ten Commandments



Kathleen Wiley

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Most Scripture passages from the New English Bible (NEB), with occasional use of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (RSV).

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Introduction

The Ten Commandments are a cornerstone of the Judeo-Christian belief system and instruct us in how to live with one another. They are also profoundly transformative guidelines that can teach us how to respond to the instinctive, automatic, reflexive prompts of our psyche/soul, paving the way for us to relate to all aspects of our selves.

In my work as a Jungian analyst, I recognize the truths of the Scriptures as being psychological principles of how our psyche/soul works. They are natural laws true on every plane—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

In this book I offer a fresh approach to the commandments by looking at the meaning of each commandment in terms of our inner world or psyche. Applying The Ten Commandments to our relationship with our self and God Within paves the way to increased consciousness, greater energy, and right use of destructive instincts.

Jesus, an embodiment of the Christ, instructed us that energy flows from the spiritual to mental to emotional to physical plane when he said, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” The alchemists taught this truth in the dictum, “As above, so below. As within, so without.” What goes on inside of us is mirrored to us by the outer world. What goes on in our head affects what happens in our body.

The first four commandments speak to our relationship with God. Internally, we experience God in our larger Self, the totality of our psyche/soul. I look at these four commandments and what they say about the relationship between our ego, or conscious self, and God Within.

The last six commandments speak to our relationship with others. I reflect on these commandments as wisdom for the relationships between our ego/conscious self and the parts of our self that feel foreign, alien, or not us. After all, most of us do not identify the coveter, adulterer, murderer, etc. within us.

We have to master the instinctive energies of the human body that show up in the ways mentioned in The Ten Commandments so we do no harm to self (or others). When we no longer must struggle to restrain our selves from acting destructively towards our selves or others, we have harnessed energy we can use in service of our soul’s expression. We can direct the energy we would have wasted acting out towards life-giving actions.

We can protect, cultivate, and nurture creativity and generative activity by tempering the energies named in The Ten Commandments. My mediations give you steppingstones for your path in doing this. Welcome to greater wholeness and healthier living.

Note About the Use Of self/Self

In Jungian psychology, Self is the organizing principle of our psyche/soul. Carl Jung once described the Self as a part of God that God put in us so we would know there is a God. It holds all that is known and unknown in our psyches. It is the totality of who we are. The Self is the psychological structure through which we experience oneness with God. For this reason, I refer to the Self as God Within.

In contrast, the ego (or little “s” self) is our conscious sense of who we are. It is the self we feel we are. It is a narrow manifestation of the larger Self or God Within. Think of the Self as the base of the pyramid and the ego/self as the point. The self is an extension of the Self.

Building a conscious relationship between the ego/self and the Self/God Within is primary in Jungian psychology. An inner relational approach to the Scriptures supports the Judeo-Christian emphasis on a personal relationship between us and God.

In this book, you will see use of both self and Self to refer to the different parts of our psyche. Because of the way I use these terms, I also use the spelling our selves, rather than the standard ourselves.

Overview

Exodus 20:1–20, The Ten Commandments: An Invitation To Transform Desires

Jesus said, “I came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law.” (Matthew 5:17) When asked what is the greatest commandment, he replied: “The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37–40)

Jesus’ teaching ushered in a shift to the law of love. He called us to understand that the greatest commandment is the relational governance of the heart. The way of God demands more than the tempering of the instinctive self, as codified in the Law based on The Ten Commandments.

Jesus called us to look inside of our selves. He repeatedly responded to questions about right and wrong actions by directing people to focus on their hearts. His teachings move us from an outer world focus to the inner world of relationship to God, self, and other.

“Judge not and be ye not judged” and “Let he is without sin cast the first stone” are examples of how Jesus called us to tend our relationships to God, Self, and others as the new standard or law. He did not collude with the established law of the day that promoted one person’s authority over another’s. He directed us to consider our relationship with our self and God first in lieu of making judgments about other people.

To tend our relationship to self and God Within, we must be honest with our selves about what goes on inside of us. We must see the emotions, impulses, images, thoughts, and feelings that arise and relate to them. Denying, repressing, dismissing, projecting, or suppressing them only leads to a build-up of energy in the unconscious. Sooner or later, this energy grabs us, like the proverbial hand from the grave. To face all that is within us, we have to release the idea that having a feeling, thought, or desire is the same as acting it out. It is not.

In Matthew 5:28 Jesus stated, “If a man looks on a woman with a lustful eye, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Some sources cite this passage in saying lust is the same as committing the act of adultery. The passage gave rise to the idea that action and thought are one and the same. This is a gross misunderstanding.

The Oxford Study Edition of The New English Bible and *The Interpreter’s Bible Commentary* both note that Jesus’ statement was giving the Law an inner dimension. *The Interpreter’s Bible Commentary* addresses the historical context in which “the rabbis, however, held generally that a man’s good intentions are reckoned to him as good deeds, while his evil intentions are counted only if he succumbs to them.” The

commentary elaborates by saying Jesus would “*prevent the act by transforming man’s desires.*” The emphasis is on our inner life and how we respond to the desires and impulses within. The path to God is one of transformed instinctive desires.

I repeat: To have a feeling, thought, or desire and not act on it is different from acting on it. We all possess the same desires, feelings, and energies whether we act on them or not. None of us are better than or above the person who does not channel the energies in service of life. We all have to learn how to temper the instinctive, animal nature. I often say that The Ten Commandments would not be here if we didn’t need them to instruct us on the use of energies within our nature.

To transform our instinctive nature, we need to interrupt the destructive, automatic, reflexive responses to our emotions, sensations, and impulses. Then, we can relate to the energy to see the need behind the instinctive prompt. The emotions, sensations, and impulses are messengers from our larger Self. Our job, the work of our egos, is to listen and hear the need of psyche/soul carried in the message.

Here’s an example: We’ve all heard of someone who gets a lot of housework done when angry. The anger becomes the fuel to clean up something literally when it isn’t lost in an explosion or shut off by withdrawing from felt experience. The literal act of cleaning the physical realm can mirror the inner process of cleaning up responses in the attached situation. For instance, if we are angry about being treated a certain way, the anger can help us identify what we want to do differently in that situation. The anger is information about something that’s needed. Tantrum behavior only wastes the energy.

The Ten Commandments offer us a blueprint for living with other people and with all aspects of our selves. Relating to the Commandments as principles for inner harmony and overall health, we are guided to follow the path of transforming our desires. We adopt healthy attitudes towards all parts of our psyche/soul. In the process, we begin to live the Greatest Commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Inner Reflection

Where do you struggle with your impulses and desires? Where are you still trying to live according to the Law of shoulds, musts, ought tos?

Use your body-mind—intellectual and feeling abilities—to consider the struggle as an inner one between the legalistic inner authority and God Within. Where do various bits of your Self want different things? Experience conflict? Attack one another?

Invite God Within to help you see the deeper processes at work inside of you. Dialogue with the energies with an openness to something shifting. Set sacred intention to open to transformation on the inside.

First Commandment

Exodus 20:3, Have No Other Gods

Verse 3: "You shall have no other gods before me."

Jesus said, "You cannot serve two Masters." Internally, we know the struggle. We want conflicting things at the same time. We want dessert, but we want to lose weight. We want to sleep in, but we want to get up early to exercise. We want a partner, but we want no attachments. We want to save money, but we want to buy a luxury item. The list goes on and on.

It's as if two gods or masters are vying for our loyalty. Our conscious self, ego, has to choose. What desire trumps the other? What aspect of psyche (soul) will be our priority? Who and what in us come first? How do we know which to follow?

If we practice the first commandment as an inner one, we realize we are more than any one emotion, thought, feeling, impulse, sensation, desire, etc. There is a Self larger than our ego. We are more than any one experience we have. I think of the larger Self as the aspect of us that is made in the image of God. The larger Self holds the essence of who we are on a soul level.

The psychological work of individuation or salvation is to develop a conscious relationship between the ego and the Self. In psychology, this relationship is the ego-Self axis. In Christian theology, the ego-Self axis is living in service to the Holy Spirit. When we live out of this flow, we practice the first commandment.

Our ego recognizes all that goes on inside of us is an expression of the Self and has a place in the totality of who we are. When a feeling, thought, desire, etc. is connected to the whole of who we are, it is tempered by the other, sometimes conflicting, energies. The process of holding any one content in relation to the whole honors the reality of who we are. *The reality includes complexity, conflicts, positives, negatives, desirables, and undesirables.*

When an individual content (i.e., feeling, thought, desire) usurps authority, our attitude and actions become one-sided. The one-sidedness dismisses the remaining soul energies that seek expression. We are now inadvertently following other gods. We have lost sight of the totality of Self, God Within, as our guiding force. We become identified with one state (emotion, idea, feeling, etc.) to the exclusion of all others. In these moments, we do the things that we later regret or feel guilty about. We are acting with a "god" other than the true God Within.

Our ego has a hard time accepting the multiplicity of self. We want to be just one way, to have only certain feelings, to desire only what we think we "should." The first commandment reminds us of the reality of our nature. We are a mixed bag of desires, impulses, thoughts, feelings, etc. Accepting this reality, we can tend to all

that arises inside of us with an eye towards its rightful place as an expression of God Within. In this way, we “have no other gods before [Yahweh].”

Inner Reflection

How do you honor God Within? What are the tools and practices that support you in living the larger truth of your psyche/soul? What are the impulses, desires, emotions, etc. currently active in your body-mind? Acknowledge each one. Dialogue with them. Ask God Within to help you see their place in the whole of who you are as a child of God. Set sacred intention to “have no other gods before [Yahweh].”

Second Commandment

Exodus 20:4–5, Make No Graven Images

Verses 4–5: *“You shall not make for yourself an idol [also translated as graven image], or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.”*

The second commandment reminds me of the adage, “To thine own self be true.” Integrity, self-respect, and self esteem come from living our truth, from following our heart. Part of our spiritual and psychological work is to discern the truth of our heart from the truth of our felt sense in the moment. The truth of our heart refers metaphorically to the truth of our soul. It is the truth of our larger Self, not the truth of the ego in a limited moment in time.

The larger Self is the psychological term for God Within. We all have experienced the repercussions of going against the guidance of our inner Self. We experience the jealous God (referenced in the second commandment) within our body-mind when we ignore the truth of our heart/soul and serve learned patterns of being and doing.

The inner “jealous God” speaks in feelings of discontent, general malaise, being “sick to one’s stomach,” anger, restlessness, self-hatred, and dislike for our circumstances. These are just a few of the messengers that let us know when we’ve served a graven image.

What are the graven images or idols we create internally? The Scripture says do not make idols in “any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.” Heaven, earth, and water are symbolic of our thoughts, body sensations, and emotions, respectively.

Our psyche automatically creates feedback loops of attitudes and beliefs based on the meanings we conclude from our body sensations and emotions. Too often, the feedback loops end in behavior that blocks the natural flow of our soul’s energy. The feedback loops or patterns artificially restrict us.

When we realize our well-being is tied to following the living God Within, we see how static images or idols are deadly. They block the flow of the life force. The Mystery of our larger Self cannot be contained in any one image or idol.

Our identification with certain ways of being and doing can block our conscious access to God Within. We act as if certain beliefs, convictions, and habits are the whole truth of who we are. We ignore, dismiss, deny, or repress any emotions, desires, or impulses that do not fit the previous boxes. Yet, these reactions are all only an expression of an aspect of God Within us.

No one bit is the whole of who we are. We limit our selves through the resulting lack of consciousness, but then we blame God. We fail to see the long-held convictions that have become idols separating us from our larger Self.

Most of us can relate to the image of “good girl” or “good boy.” A lot of us have spent our lives trying to live up to what those terms mean to those around us. In the process, we have repressed or split off natural God-given desires and impulses.

The Scripture is clear we suffer from the misguided efforts of others who steer us to patterns of being and doing that serve idealized images instead of God Within. The result is a loss of conscious access to the energies within our body-mind. Instead of relating to the feelings, impulses, and desires within our nature, we fall prey to the lure of a static image we think is our true self. The energies that plague us in unwanted thoughts, fantasies, and daydreams reflect the split-off energies.

Our static image of our self usually arises from past history. Our felt experiences, our reactions, and other’s reactions create ideas about who and how we are that are not the whole truth. We inadvertently foreclose our conscious opening to the flow of our larger Self.

We suffer physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually when we live from the idea of who we are instead of the truth of who we are. The second commandment is a call to stay connected to the living, flowing essence of our life force that is our experience of God Within. Our essence is far more than any one thought, attitude, belief, felt sense, perception, body sensation, emotion, affect, or feeling.

God Within is the holder of limitless possibilities. The Self, the psychological structure through which we connect with God, is far larger than any one image or pattern we exhibit. We are called to seek God Within beyond any one graven image that surfaces in patterns of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, feelings, and actions.

Inner Reflection

What graven images do you hold about yourself, others, and the world that block the flow of life? Identify the specific beliefs, ideas, teachings, and/or patterns that shape how you make meaning of life events. Do they serve your image of who you are or do they serve the larger Self?

What are the self-definitions you hold? Where are they rooted—in past history or in the reality of God Within? Set sacred intention to see where you inadvertently serve an idol. Open to experiencing the living presence of God Within.

Third Commandment

Exodus 20:7, The Name of God

Verse 7:

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." (NASB)

"You shall not take a false oath in the name of the Lord your God; for the Lord will not declare him innocent who takes an oath in his name falsely." (Lamsa Bible)

Oh, how we fool our selves! We act in ways incongruent with our heart's truths. We pretend our one-sided expressions (positive or negative) are all we feel. We make statements to our selves and others as if they were the absolute truth when they are only partial truths (positive or negative). We proclaim to have feelings or convictions that are not real. We create messes for our selves when we live falsehoods as if they were are soul's truths.

In looking at the third of The Ten Commandments as an inner principle, I am reminded of the deceit we inadvertently fall into when we reject, deny, dismiss, or rationalize away any of our feelings and intuitions.

The Scripture states, "The Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." We tend to feel punished and victimized by God when we suffer the natural consequences of our falsehoods. Instead of blaming God, we need to recognize how we have helped create the unpleasant circumstances with proclamations of partial truths or total untruths.

When we represent a feeling or a belief as if it were from our heart and soul, we are invoking the sanction of our larger Self or God Within. When we misrepresent or outright lie about our heart's truth, it's akin to taking the name of the Lord your God in vain. The larger Self that holds the essence of God Within us wants to be known in its entirety.

The drive to wholeness is innate within our psyches. Wholeness includes all we aspire to be and do as well as all we pretend to not be and feel. We've been trained that certain ideas, feelings, and behaviors are acceptable and good while others are unacceptable and bad. The result is we take false "oaths" by speaking learned truths instead of our heart's truths. We end up heavy-hearted, burdened, and unhappy.

In Egyptian mythology, the hearts of the dead were weighed against the feather of the goddess *Ma'at*. If their hearts were as "light as a feather," they were granted eternal life. If not, the creature *Ammut* devoured them. The lightness of the heart indicated the soul was not burdened with sin and evil.

When we live out of fear and defensive posturing, we get separated from our larger Self. We end up out of balance with the lightness of our hearts. We feel weighted down physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually when our choices are not in alignment with God Within.

“Lightness of the heart” does not exclude any emotions. Grief, disappointment, concern, care, and other feelings have their place alongside joy, satisfaction, peace, trust, etc. Our ability to keep our selves in relationship to our feelings and God Within is what allows the balancing of the momentary felt experience with the totality of the soul.

Remember, we are more than any one felt experience. The totality of who we are is bigger than any one state of consciousness, and we can dialogue with whatever arises in us. In the conscious dialogue between our ego and our inner states of feeling, desire, etc., our heart and soul can balance the conflicts within our personality and ego. Then, we will not take the “name of the Lord in vain.”

Inner Reflection

Where do you feel in turmoil with yourself? Where do you see yourself saying and doing one thing, but feeling and desiring another in your heart?

Take an inner inventory: Where are you half-hearted instead of whole-hearted? Where are you empty-hearted instead of full-hearted? Identify actions you can take to be whole-hearted and full-hearted in those areas. Ask the Indwelling Presence of God Within to give you clarity and courage to live the truth of your heart and soul.

Fourth Commandment

Exodus 20:9, Remember the Sabbath

Verses 9–11: *“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work; But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God...For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the seas, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.”*

When was the last time you took the seventh day of the week to rest? The day known as the Sabbath is a day to let down, look within, listen to the Indwelling Presence of God, and pay attention to all that's stirring internally.

Our busy lifestyles, fast-paced travels, need for constant stimulation, and instant contact using technology pull us out of our selves. We get consciously separated from our center—the still point deep within our psyches where we know God Within. The outer world with its relationships, demands, responsibilities, and seductions pulls us away and we deny the need for a Sabbath.

We forget rest creates space for consciously connecting to all aspects of our selves, including God Within. *The Interpreter's Bible* states, “The rest [of God at the end of Creation] constituted the creation of the Sabbath, which thus expresses God's own nature.” As we are created in the image of God, observing the Sabbath provides a doorway into our larger Self. We are sanctified in that we become more whole as we connect to more bits of our psyche/soul.

The fourth commandment is a call to take one-seventh of our time, energies, and resources to rest. What does it mean to rest in order to be sanctified? The word rest comes from the Old English *ræstan*, whose meanings include “cease from motion, work, or performance; be without motion; be undisturbed, be free from what disquiets; stand or lie as upon a support or basis.”

I imagine the rest that sanctifies is a ceasing from outer doing, a stilling of inner thoughts and emotions, a quieting of the chatterbox in our minds, a centering of our being in our larger Self, and a listening to the inner voices with an ear to hear God Within.

Resting is far more than stopping work, performance, or activities! It is an active state of consciousness where we receive the wholeness of our nature as human beings created in the image of God.

To be sanctified is to be made holy. To be made holy is to become whole. To become whole means we relate to all that flows within us. In so doing, the psychic/soul energies take their rightful place in our personality and conscious self. In rest, we make inner space for the needed dialogue between our ego (conscious self), our

larger Self (God Within), and whatever bit of self is present as a thought, feeling, emotion, sensation, etc. The wholeness of our nature includes all of who we are.

The rational and the non-rational, the sane and the crazy, the desirable and the undesirable are all a part of our nature. We need days of rest to greet and integrate each of these energies into our self. Otherwise, they prompt one-sided behaviors (attitudes, feelings, actions) that are not holy.

“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the seas, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day.” Even God needed rest according to the Genesis Creation story. Will we follow the Divine’s example?

Inner Reflection

What is your relationship to the Sabbath? Do you disregard your need for rest? Where, how, and when do you experience moments of rest that include a ceasing from outer doing, a stilling of inner thoughts and emotions, a quieting of the chatterbox in your mind, a centering of your being in your larger Self, and a listening to the inner voices with an ear to hear God Within?

Identify how you can implement taking a seventh day for knowing your self and God Within. What spiritual practices and psychological tools can you use to create the inner rest? Set sacred intention to begin observing the Sabbath. Ask the Inner Divine Spirit to help you follow through.

Preface To Commandments Five Through Ten

The fifth commandment begins the injunctions about our relationships to other people. When we look at the commandments as a blueprint for our inner life, other people represent aspects of our psyche/soul other than our ego. We all have daily experiences of dealing with the “others” in us that sabotage what our ego wants.

The others shows up as unbidden thoughts, emotions, sensations, or desires that interfere with our focus, distract us from what we’re doing, and sidetrack our energies. We need to remember the old adage, “I have a plan for the day, and the Mystery has a plan for the day.” The others are messengers from God Within.

The reality of who we are is so much more than our conscious felt sense in any one moment. The Mystery of the Divine lives in us. We are so much more than we think we are. The meditations on commandments five through ten focus on how we live in relationship to the “others” within our selves.

Fifth Commandment

Exodus 20:12, Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

Verse 12: *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you.”*

We all need a mother and a father! We know what this means on the physical plane regarding childbirth. I want us to consider what it means in terms of our inner reality and our relationship to our selves.

We need an inner mother and inner father to give birth to and grow our heart's desires. The dance of life involves the stimulating, inseminating energies of the masculine (father) initiating new life in the nurturing, containing womb of the feminine (mother). Our relationship to the inner mother and father is the crucible in which we birth aspects of our soul into our consciousness.

In looking at The Ten Commandments as principles governing our psyche/soul, the fifth commandment calls upon us to “Honor our [inner] father and our mother.” Honor means to show appreciation, respect, and affection for the other. Recognize is a synonym for honor.

To honor our father and mother means to recognize, respect, and appreciate them. When was the last time you thought about how your internal mother and father treat you? We tend to forget about the importance of the inner parents' attitudes, actions, and feelings towards us. The first step in honoring mother and father is to respectfully relate to their energies within us.

Cross-culturally, the images of Father and Mother evoke certain feelings. There are particular affects, emotions, desires, actions we associate with fathers and mothers. The mention of Father triggers positive feelings of providing, planning, protecting, launching, and guiding and/or negative feelings of denying, depowering, abandoning, or castrating.

The mention of Mother brings up positive feelings of nurturing, feeding/nursing, caring for, consoling, and holding and/or negative feelings of rejecting, starving, indifference, or devouring/using. We know from our experiences as parents and our experiences with parents that the positives and negatives coexist.

To honor the reality of the inner parents means we recognize our need to mother and to father our selves. We pay due respect to our outer world parents as we recognize the learned, internalized ways of dealing with our selves that mirror our outer world parents. We honor them by seeing the purpose their ways, now our ways, serve. This means looking compassionately to see how the internalized behavior is serving us now, even if it's problematic.

By honoring/recognizing the inner parents, we open to the inborn, spiritual presence of the Father and/or Mother that can bring the needed aspects of the internal parental energies.

Within us, there is an unconscious template of the Great Father and Great Mother. Within us lives the innate Father and Mother with the abilities to stimulate, grow, give, nurture, and protect life. They also have the power to stagnate, kill, take away, deny, and hurt us. Our outer world experiences determine which of these qualities have been activated. In honoring our parents, outer and inner, we can see the interplay of life-giving and life-destroying actions. We can consciously invite the activation of the life-giving cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

Our spiritual and psychological work includes cultivating inner parents who birth, nurture, and live our soul's desires. To do this, we have to recognize the positive and negative ways we deal with our selves. We have to see how the patterns have served us even if they are now problematic. We can then reach to the larger Self, God Within, to help us know the aspects of the inner parents needed for life. Mothers and Fathers are necessary for new life in the inner world as well as in the outer!

Inner Reflection

How do you mother and father yourself? Do you pretend you don't need nurturing, protecting, guiding, launching, etc.? Do you push yourself without the loving limits of caring inner parents?

I invite you to honor—to recognize, appreciate, and respect—your inner mother and father. Practice active imagination by dialoguing with the internalized parents. Be willing to see your limitations without blame or judgment. Call upon God Within to help you access and practice the needed, life-giving actions of the Great Mother and Great Father.

Postscript

The Interpreter's Bible states, "Both Judaism and Christianity are family religions... [Citing Matthew 12:50, it states] the family tie was taken by Jesus as the best illustration of all deep spiritual kinship." All that lives in us is part of our inner family. We have a deep energetic connection with all of who we are—what we feel, think, sense, and intuit. The path of individuation and salvation requires that we honor the deep spiritual kinship of all that is in us.

Sixth Commandment

Exodus 20:13, Thou Shalt Not Kill

Verse 13:

"You shall not kill." (Lamsa Translation)

"You shall not commit murder." (New English Translation)

The sixth commandment seems clear enough. No killing! Yet, killing goes on all the time in our inner world. The destructive impulses insidiously find ways to kill us with their criticisms, judgments, harsh evaluations, rational approaches, and self-hatred.

In the face of such shame-producing responses, we lose our selves. We lose our autonomy. We become a mish-mash of sensations and emotions that yield confusion, inattention, stagnation, and inertia.

According to Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, to kill means to "cause something living to die." Murder is "the crime of deliberately killing someone." Psychologically, being killed means losing our sense of self.

When we have our self, we feel alive and energized. We are aware of the life force pulsating through us. We have an awareness of where we start and stop, what we are sensing and intuiting, and how we think and feel. With our self, we have the ability to make sense of our experiences. We can differentiate between outer and inner realities, present and historical states of consciousness.

Without our "self," we are directionless, ungrounded, airy, and prone to acting like an extension of someone else. We lack a center of consciousness that connects us to the truth of our larger Self, the point of access to God Within. It's as if we do not exist.

We begin to develop a sense of self between the ages of two and four. The psychosocial developmental task of this phase is autonomy versus shame. Autonomy means we have a sense of who we are as a separate being in relationship to others. The assertion of their separateness earns two-to-three year olds the descriptor "terrible twos and threes."

From the beginning, having a separate self is greeted with mixed emotions by the people around us. The degree to which we are welcomed, nurtured, and contained within appropriate limits is the degree to which we develop a healthy sense of self. As we grow, our abilities, talents, desires, and impulses are guided into our being and doing. The degree to which we are shunned, humiliated, and over-contained (shut down) is the degree to which we carry toxic shame.

Toxic shame annihilates our sense of self; it is the greatest killer we will ever meet. It thwarts our autonomy; it destroys our sense of self. It induces feelings of self-hate, core badness, unworthiness, being no good, and having no right to exist. If we feel we have no right to exist, we lose access to our soul's desires, longings, and energies. We are killed.

We are responsible for mediating the killing energies in our psyche/soul. Destructive impulses are a part of our nature. Our job is to get to know them, wrestle with them, and use them in service of life.

The Interpreter's Bible notes the injunction against killing did not negate scriptural authorizations for killing of enemies in war or capital punishment. In these references, war is waged to protect that which nourishes and sustains life. The right use of destructive impulses is to protect what nourishes and sustains us.

Psychologically, killing an inner enemy or murderer means slaying a pattern of self-hate that causes us to lose connection to our self and God Within. When we "kill" the feedback loops that have destroyed our connection to God Within, the psychic energy caught in the "killer" is freed and can be used in service of life. We have the impetus to practice compassion and self-love.

Compassion and self-love nurture our soul and sense of self. By cultivating compassion, we practice the sixth commandment. We give up attitudes, actions, and self-talk that annihilate our sense of self. We honor God Within as we stay alive.

Inner Reflection

Breathe into your body-mind. Notice what it's like to be in your body home. Where does annihilating, toxic shame live in you? How do you kill yourself off intentionally and unintentionally? What are the messages, feelings, memories, etc. that express the inner enemy that murders you?

Call on God Within to help you keep yourself, to have your autonomy, to stay separate from the inner murderer. Become willing to align with your larger Self and take action to protect, nurture, and birth your soul's desires.

Seventh Commandment

Exodus 20:14, Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery

Exodus 20:14: “You shall not commit adultery.”

The commandments that deal with our relationships to others are so common that we tend to dismiss them without looking at their deeper meanings. When we consider the injunctions symbolically, we have guidelines for living with our self and all we are.

Carl Jung said we are a *coincidentia oppositorum*. We are a coincidence of opposites. We all know the reality of inner conflict. What side do we pick? With which aspect of Self do we join? The seventh commandment offers some guidance in this area.

The seventh commandment forbids adultery. Adultery is “the act of sexual intercourse with a married woman or man,” as defined by *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*. The commandment asserts the sacredness of sexual union in marriage.

The act of sexual intercourse is as close as we get to the experience of being in our mother’s womb. As separate human beings, the joining that occurs through intercourse likens to being one with the mother when we are in the womb. For this reason, sex triggers powerful feelings and expectations beyond its physical pleasures.

The feeling of oneness, being an extension of another, being fed by another, and having the same body-mind are primary sensations and emotions associated with union. Positive and negative consequences result from experiencing such feelings. The positive aspect of oneness echoes the state of timelessness and eternity and feels like bliss. The negative aspects include jealousy, rage, feelings of abandonment, and feeling lost when not with one’s partner. The reality that two separate people are involved in the act of union necessitates we be conscious and intentional with the emotional and spiritual aspects of sexual union.

In the evolution of humanity, The Ten Commandments offered a blueprint towards controlling instinctive, animal-like impulses. Regarding the seventh commandment, *The Interpreter’s Bible* states, “It was a step in the process of humanizing nature; it is a milestone in the long and devious road that leads from the brute to the human...for the body is a schoolroom in which the soul does grow, and the soul loves it so that they become one...” (p. 987)

Resonate for a moment with the idea of the body and soul becoming one. I think of the body as the laboratory in which our soul experiments with how to live in the world. The first world is our body. What we experience inside of our self is the raw data, the *prima materia*, with which we build a sense of self.

The environment and relationships outside of us are the larger schoolhouse in which we try our ways of being, doing, relating, playing, working, and creating. Our soul wants to express itself in these activities. To do so, the soul must infuse the body—our cellular consciousness, our reflexive movements, our automatic thoughts, and our feelings are expressions of our soul.

When the body and soul are not joined, the body is vulnerable to energies that are not our true nature. Instead of acting congruently with the soul, the body becomes one with whatever energy has the most power. The body responds to the attitude, feeling, emotion, etc. that is strongest, even if it comes from outside us. The information of our soul that comes in body sensation and intuition is replaced by learned responses. Some of these responses are expressions of the instinctive fight or flight response. Instead of acting in alignment with our heart's desires, we act on whims. In these moments, the body is caught in the act of adultery. We have betrayed our selves by uniting with something other than our soul. Our actions do not express the truth of our soul.

Our ego has the job of holding all we experience in relationship to God Within. Adultery is easy to commit when our consciousness becomes the agent of desires and emotions that do not come from our soul. We have to pay attention to the Indwelling Presence, God Within, who energizes us. With ego consciousness, we can become conscious of our heart's desires. We can choose to act from the sacred union of our body and soul.

Inner Reflection

What's the state of union between your body and soul? How do you move in and with your body?

Imagine your soul expressing itself through your body's movements, including your activities. What would stay the same? What would be different?

Be courageous and acknowledge the places you are not one with your body and soul. Ask God Within to guide you to a holy union, a union of wholeness.

Eighth Commandment

Exodus 20:15, You Shall Not Steal

Verse 15: *“You shall not steal.”*

The eighth commandment focuses our attention on the sacredness of property. In communal life, we are not to take that which is not ours. We are not to commit a theft or “carry off without right or leave.”¹ The sanctity of relationships necessitates respecting what belongs to another.

The injunction to not steal first applies to the body and psychic energy. Our body with its psychic/soul energy is our primary home. We might say it is our first property. Freud said that our ego, our conscious self, begins in the body. The sixth and seventh commandments call for respecting another’s life by not killing and not committing adultery. The eighth commandment extends the respect to belongings.

The first possession we have is our psychic energy, also known as the life force, chi, and libido. This pulsating, vibrating, enlivening energy keeps us alive. We experience it in our body sensations, intuitions, thoughts, and feelings. It is the passionate energy in our images or fantasies and impulses or reflexive movements.

The desires, impulses, images, etc. we experience are the contents of our primary home, the body temple. They first and foremost reflect the psychological factors, also known as instincts, of hunger, sexuality, movement, self-reflection, and creativity.² Each factor carries an energetic charge that demands action specific to it.

When we ignore, dismiss, repress, or deny the needs related to any of the psychological factors, we inadvertently steal energy from that aspect of our self. We mistakenly call such acts willpower. We have all had experiences of trying to will our selves to ignore an impulse. We resist an urge, try to repress it, or talk our selves out of it. We may temporarily appear to succeed, but we usually experience a backlash. The desire resurfaces in unpleasant physical symptoms, emotions, moods, or fantasies. Stealing has its consequences.

The eighth commandment reminds us that to live in healthy, sacred relationship, even with our selves, we cannot steal. When an energetic state arises, we are called to dialogue with the desire, impulse, mood, fantasy, etc. The act of dialoguing with the inner state invites an integration of the instinctive energy into our total self. Instead of acting independently of our larger Self, the energy becomes accessible by will, or choice. We can then influence how, where, and when it flows. We are able to act on our hunger, sexuality, movement, self-reflection, and creativity with action aligned with our soul.

1 www.etymonline.com

2 Jung, Carl, “Psychological Factors Determining Human Behavior,” *CW, Vol. 8*, 1936.

The work of wholeness necessitates honoring the energy of all aspects of our Self. Each desire or impulse has a gradient the energy wants to follow. Our ego's job is to give each bit of Self its due by relating to it respectfully. As the ego dialogues with the psychic/soul energy, a means of expressing it congruent with our soul emerges.

I am reminded of Jesus' statement, "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." We are called to discern what belongs where in terms of our attention. Our energy will then follow. When we do this, we do not steal energy from the "others" in us.

Inner Reflection

How can you honor the impulses and desires of your heart today? Where do you inadvertently steal energy from one part of yourself for another?

Make room today for the heart's desire you have been putting off. Practice dialoguing with whatever arises in you with an eye towards wholeness. Reflect on how you respond to your instinctive needs of hunger, sexuality, movement, self-reflection, and creativity. Ask God Within to help you manage your energies so that each gets its due in service of your soul.

Ninth Commandment

Exodus 20:19, Thou Shall Not Bear False Witness

Verse 19: *“You shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”*

In the historical context, the ninth commandment established the sacredness of the judicial process in stating we are not to bear false witness against our neighbor. We are not to misrepresent, lie, or fabricate actions to suit our fancy. We are to tell “the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth.”

Looking at the commandment as an injunction for our inner world, we have a foundational principle for overall health: Our ability to be truthful with our self, about all of what’s happening inside of us, determines the degree to which we can be healthy.

Jungian Analyst Edward Edinger once wrote, “How much reality can one ego stand!” The lies we tell our selves serve as salve to emotional pain that feels unbearable. We begin collecting false evidence against our selves early in life by internalizing other people’s judgments, fears, repulsions, and hatred towards impulses, desires, and feeling states that are part of the human experience.

Somewhere along the way, humans collectively deemed certain feelings bad and sinful. This laid the foundation for us all to begin lying to our selves. It was the first piece of false evidence we agreed to believe.

The process of being real means facing all that is within us. The image of Judgment Day gives a visual for the anticipated dread of seeing the truth of our self in actions. To grow, to become more whole, to be all we are created to be happens only as we are present with all that is within us.

In the process of relating to all within, we develop a resilient self that can relate to whatever unpleasant or pleasant feeling states arise. When we can consciously meet and bear our felt experiences, we can integrate the energy of the affect or emotion and use it in service of our soul’s truth.

When we integrate our felt sense, we consciously connect to and channel the energy in a chosen direction. The felt emotion and body sensations become fuel for our actions.

When we deny, repress, or split off feelings, the energy fuels action in our most vulnerable areas. The vulnerable area may be in our body; we may get sick with a specific recurring illness. The vulnerability may show up in self-care; we reengage in self-sabotaging behaviors such as overeating, overdrinking, and tolerating abusive interactions. Psychic energy, our life force, will find an outlet for expression no matter how hard we try to block it!

Our impulses and emotions drive our body-mind. They shape the pathway our energy wants to follow. To not bear false witness against our selves, we have to compassionately see the pathways that have been set in motion. We need an attitude of equanimity with all parts of our self.

Consciously relating to our thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations, and intuitions makes them more human. They become bearable. Then, we can see clearly and honestly the truth of who we are. With the truth of our whole self, we can live more fully, wholly, and authentically.

Inner Reflection

Where have you held onto falsehoods that block your life force and thwart your growth? What is the truth about your self that needs facing now?

Call on God Within to help you see what needs to be seen in your nature. With each breath, consciously feel the flow of the Divine Essence through you. Affirm the presence of your Divine soul in all of who you are.

Tenth Commandment

Exodus 20:17, You Shall Not Covet

Verse 17: *“You shall not covet (your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbors’ wife, his slave, his slave-girl, his ox, his ass, or anything that belongs to him.)”*

We learned as children we’re not supposed to take things from other people. Watching young children at play, we can see the instinctive nature that takes what it wants from whomever it wants. We have to learn to not grab what we want out of another’s hand. The alpha nature of the pack leader that seeks to dominate others lives in the human animal. The tenth commandment instructs us to temper the animal nature by not coveting another’s possessions.

The Interpreter’s Concise Commentary says, “Generally the verb translated covet denotes inordinate desire, but in view of the nature of the social offenses in the rest of the Decalogue it more likely refers here to practical measures taken to secure the desired object.”

Our desire is not prohibited. *What is prohibited is the action of taking from another something they possess that we want.*

In our inner world, the pack leader often shows up as a voice or feeling state that moves our focus and attention away from the intended desire and to something else. We want to settle into a feeling state that allows us to move towards what we want, but we get sidetracked.

Voices that say, “You should be doing [fill in the blank]” or “This...has to be done” disturb our center. We may hear, “You’re no good at that.” Or “Why bother? You won’t be able to do it.” A covetous energy takes our momentum. We lose our focus, drive, and ability to move forward with what we set out to do.

The inner pack leader manifests in different ways. Two common ones are the puritanical, task-oriented authority and the airy, ungrounded, whatever-goes mentality.

The first robs our creative desires and soul’s longings by keeping us overly focused on practical, pragmatic, outer-world issues. Our emotional nature, including desires, gets taken over by “should, musts, and ought to.” The to-do lists reign supreme.

On the other hand, the airy, ungrounded authority prevents us from rooting our desires in the logistics. We are unable to take effective action on what we want. We can’t identify the specifics needed to take the next action step forward. We lack the structure necessary to live our heart’s desires in the outer world.

In writing about the first commandment, I noted the multiplicity of the Self. We all contain many desires, some conflicting and even opposing others. Our conflicting beliefs, values, and habits affect how we embody our heart's desires. Each has its own voice that represents a current of psychic energy or bit of Self. I sometimes refer to these bits as characters inside of us. The tenth commandment instructs us to let each of these characters have their possession—their energy.

As we consciously relate to each of the voices/feeling states within us, we open to hear the voice of God Within to know how to express the energy in a life-giving way. The act of conscious relating invites a synthesis of desires that honors the totality of our psyche/soul. Previously opposing and covetous energies are balanced by the totality of who we are.

The dominant belief about our self, life, others, and what we can and can't have is the pack leader that channels our energy unconsciously. We can recognize this dominant belief by paying attention to our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Tracking what happens inside of us, and the resulting action, paves the way for inner dialogue between our heart and all that lives within us. We realize that taking from another (inner or outer) doesn't work for our growth. As we consciously seek what we desire within our own nature, covetous energies are checked and balanced organically.

Inner Reflection

How does your inner pack leader operate? What stops you from doing what you truly desire? How do you limit yourself? What images or fantasies run through your mind about your desires?

Compassionately watch to see how the pack leader steals energy from your focus to act on your desire. Set sacred intention to check the covetous pack leader within, so your soul's desires can express more fully in your life today.

About the Author

Kathleen Wiley is a Diplomate in Analytical Psychology. She is licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist and a Professional Counselor and has a private practice in Davidson, North Carolina.

Her background includes a B.A. in Christian Education and a Masters in Human Development and Learning. Her work focuses on empowering people to live out of a conscious relationship to the Self/God Within. She realizes the importance of encountering God as part of the human experience of being in a physical body and the importance of interpersonal experiences of relationship.

She is the author of [*New Life: Symbolic Meditations on the Birth of the Christ Within*](#), which offers meditations for Advent and Christmas, and [*New Life: Symbolic Meditations on the Promise of Easter and Spring*](#), which offers meditations for the Lent/Easter season.

Read more of her meditations at her website, [Inner Divine Spirit](#).

About the Cover Photo

Kathleen took the cover photo on her honeymoon, inspired by the opening created by the greenery as she walked towards the beach on Seabrook Island. As she was taking pictures, she saw something zoom across the walkway and later saw a beautiful bird in her photo. Our encounters with the Inner Divine Spirit sometimes happen like this. They come out of nowhere when our focus is on something else, and we do not know what we experienced until later. The photo seemed like the perfect opening for New Life.