

5, 17, 23 and Now

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A Fantastical Story of Reality

Ladies and gentlemen, before I begin this story, I'd like to introduce myself. I am me, and me is we, and my name is Now. Thank you.

“Excuse me everybody. Please take your places. Silence!” Now said, starting the meeting in her bossy tone. “We have a potential expulsion set for today. It's time we integrate our aggregates. We've come pretty far together with no major mishaps. This is the time we solidify our personality.”

“I see you 17, and 23, but where is 5? Why can't she just grow up once? Today really is about her. We need to discuss her antics. Frankly, I think it's time to shut 5 down.”

We, the personality, are otherwise present. I run all of us. I'm very much in charge. I am the consolidation of all moments as they happened. I am us at all ages and always at this moment, Now. As the integrator of us all, this morning I have the unfortunate task of playing the role of The Expulsionist.

17, the sweet hippy sitting crossed legged on a brainbench, picking her split-ends, is my best friend. Her peace, love, and happiness lifestyle has left us in tailspins searching for the exit to get off this ride. But 17 is cool. Being directly responsible for love, sex, flirtation, and pleasures of the skin, 17 has an enviable existence and has

satisfied her appetites in countries near and far. I truly love her clothes too, the little flower child. We all approve of her shell necklaces.

Conversely, 23 is the holder of all the responsibility. The running of the integrated self, career, husbands, and babies, has fallen to 23. To be certain, none of us would have succeeded, in any way, without the diligence of 23. And we never hear the end of it. As to her clothes, boring! She buys them, I throw them out, along with her good, brown, German shoes.

Which brings us to 5, the lovable curmudgeon, ineffable, free spirited, selfish brat. This kid has been getting too big for us. The experience snatcher keeps showing up at inopportune times and just takes over. She is showy and thoughtless of others' feelings, especially mine. 5 is happiest in the least amount of clothing possible, and prefers wearing nothing at all.

So I continued addressing the assembled. "Is there any dissent to the opinion? 5 has to go dark, right?"

The duo hushed, hands folded, squeezed white, hair nervously flicked over shoulders. "We're on the same page?" I asked. It's often so tedious having to placate this unwieldy group. "Are we ready to pass this and boot 5 out, at least for a while?"

17 stood up unsteadily, eight in the morning and already high on weed, and said, "That's cold, man. I think we need to reconsider this. Remember all the joy that little bugger brought us over the years?"

"Don't forget all those cavities, a direct result of 5's junk food cravings," heckled 23 from the back. "And why does 5 get control of our orgasm activity? I mean, really."

"Desire is what we can't lose. Our 5 has hungers," reminded 17. "We need her *joie de vivre*." There goes that 17, always throwing French around.

Now, or I, or us, to be accurate, continued the plea, "All this insurrection we've been experiencing, the slipping of the goals, the immaturity, the avaricious unquenchable hungers, sits at the dirty, scabby feet of 5. We spent years getting on this solid ground and she's mucking it up."

"She has no shut off valve," 23 said tersely. "5 embarrasses us. She always squanders the benefits I work so hard to provide."

23 rocked back and forth agitated. "Hey, 23 is good times. It's wrong that 17 and 5 take all the credit for our great life."

"Jeez," 17 said. "You're always whining about your responsibility. 5 and I could take over your job in a wink?"

Getting rid of the scotch was more difficult than I had ever anticipated. I shifted to a new tack, hoping to rein in 17. "Truthfully, I love 5," Now wheedled. "When we need to cry, 5 takes over. She's a doll, no doubt. But she talks with her mouth full and won't wear under panties. Frankly, she goes too far."

"And this is what pisses you off so much, Now?" interrupted 17, incredulous.

"Look, I'm the integrator, but I don't think I have the power to keep 5 in place anymore. Aren't you always chasing after something that she did or said, having to apologize to somebody?"

"So what?" 17 spit out. "5 has been handling our happy times since we were, well, 5?" 17 took a deep breath then blurted out, "I know love and sex are under me, but

5 is in charge of all of our hedonistic pleasures, and that includes orgasms. No way. Not giving them up. Not gonna happen. 5 stays or I shut down too.”

Whoa, this has gotten out of hand.

“Where's that kid?” Now asked. “We have to talk with her. She must be reprimanded for taking over the texting. Crimey, 17, resume all texting responsibilities, please.”

Having heard this little debate from a hidey hole in the personality recesses, 5 took a gander. 17 wore an I hate teachers expression. 23, with all that serious judgment, simply started sniffing. Now, wanting to know where that scamp was hiding, impatiently scanned the space.

When out of nowhere the personality caught a chill. Now felt waves of protoplasm wash over. Ordinarily, as the integrator, this syrupy goo wouldn't, shouldn't register, yet, we shuddered from within.

Wait, how is this happening? Now hadn't initiated an integration. Uh-oh, 5 must have swept over and assumed as integrator. But she doesn't have the power to do this. Does she?

She does not. Yet, after a hearty shake, here we are. The child has risen to the position of leader of the personality.

Celebrating, 17 and 5 lit up the bong laughing about all the sex and orgasms they were going to have. 23 felt the weight of the world descend upon her. She knew without a strong Now, the happy hippie and the spoiled imp would run roughshod over her. And 23 went dark.

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Now regressed to a braincloud for a long overdue sleep. Boundaries for 5 and 17 were dropped by the wayside. Insatiable appetites replaced rationalism. Desire defined the personality.

"I am 5, the force of the self. If you have anything to say about it, take it to Now- oh, oh, you can't. I wet my pants laughing at that one!"