

# NOTES ON “HOW TO SEE YOURSELF AS YOU REALLY ARE”

## Chapter 12 – Determining the Choices

*Now you need to establish a logical structure for the subsequent analysis. (p. 138)*

The key to this logical structure is that if the inherent “I” exists, it must be either the same as the mind-body complex, or different from it.

This chapter represents **Step 2** from the following list of steps. By now, we know that what we’re looking for in our emptiness meditations is the inherent, exaggerated “I”, not the conventional, everyday, going-to-the-store “I”. The sense of this inherent “I” exists. Now the task is to find the “I” that this sense seems to refer to. To do this, we need to divide the field into a manageable set of logical possibilities. Here again are the overall steps. We will concentrate on **Step 2 in this chapter**.

1. Identify the Target. The target is the inherently existent “I,” not the conventional “I” that depends on the mind and body. Chapter 11 talks about this.

**2. Determine the logical structure for your subsequent search for the inherently existent “I.”**

The logic is this: if the inherently existent “I” exists, then it must either be the same as the mind and body, or different from the mind and body. There are no other logical possibilities. Chapter 12 talks about this.

3. Analyze whether the inherently existent “I” is the same as the mind and body. Chapter 13 talks about this, and calls it “oneness.” That is, if the inherently existent “I” is the same as the mind and body, then they are “one.”

4. Analyze whether the inherently existent “I” is different from the mind and body. Chapter 14 talks about this, and calls it “difference.” That is, if the inherently existent “I” is different from the mind and body, then they are “different.”

Conclusion to the four steps: If we cannot find the inherently existent “I” being the same as the body or being different from the body, then we have realized that it doesn’t exist. There are no other logical choices. When we are sure that we have looked everywhere this “I” could possibly be, and haven’t found it anywhere, then this is a case of the realization of the emptiness of the self!

### Why Do We Need a Logical Structure?

The logical structure comes into play like this. In order to be sure we can really find the inherent “I,” we need to look in every possible place. We need a way of searching for the “I” which tells us what the logically possible places are. We need to feel confident about this. We need to be so confident that we’re covering all possibilities that we’ll be able to say,

***“If I don’t find the ‘I’ in all the logically possible places, then the ‘I’ doesn’t exist.”***

The reason we need this confidence is that sometimes we have the feeling that what we’re looking for might really be there, even though we looked. We might feel that we didn’t look hard enough, or that there might be a few more places that we could look, if we only knew where.

But we can use logic to help us narrow down the choices.

Imagine you have been away from home for the weekend, and you are back home now, looking for your pet cat somewhere in the house. You can narrow down the possibilities as follows:

- 1. If my cat is in the house, then she is either (a) in my bedroom or (b) in another room.***
- 2. If my cat is neither (a) in my bedroom nor (b) in another room, then she is NOT in the house.***

You are sure. If (1) is true, then (2) must also be true.

### Looking for the Inherent “I” – Same and Different

We can use logic in the same way when looking for the inherent “I” that seems to exist. We’ll look for the “I” in relation to the mind-body complex (MBC)

- 1. If the inherent “I” exists, it is either (a) the same as the MBC, or (b) different from the MBC.***
- 2. If the inherent “I” is neither (a) the same as the MBC nor (b) different from the MBC, then it doesn’t exist.***

Think about these insights, and see how (2) follows from (1). If (1) is true, then (2) must also be true. Try to think of exceptions or how the logic may break down.

Another way the Dalai Lama talks about the options is as follows.

- (a) **In addition to saying “the same as the MBC,”** he might say “is one with the MBC,” or “the self and the MBC are one.”
- (b) **In addition to saying “different from the MBC,”** he might say “the I and the MBC are two,” or “the ‘I’ and the MBC are more than one.”

### Think About Sameness and Difference in Other Ways

Think of a crime in your city. Let’s say that on May 1<sup>st</sup>, the police hear about a jewel thief who broke into a luxury hotel and stole a wealthy guest’s jewelry. Then on May 8<sup>th</sup>, they police hear about another case, almost identical. They will immediately determine a logical structure for their investigation:

***The thief of the May 1<sup>st</sup> is either the same person as the thief of the May 8<sup>th</sup> case, or different.***

Another example. You are driving through a new part of town. You pass a house with a bright, beautiful painted **chartreuse** color. A bright shade, halfway between green and yellow. It stands out because you haven’t ever seen a house painted that color before. You drive a little more, and five minutes later, then you pass a house painted **the exact same color!** This house stands out just like the first one did. In fact, it makes you wonder, did you circle back without knowing it?

***Is this chartreuse house (a) the same house that I passed five minutes ago, or (b) a different one?***

You can think of many other examples for “same” and “different” that are more relevant to emptiness investigation:

***The inherent table is either (a) the same as its parts, or (b) it is different from them.***

***The true essence of my favorite song is either (a) the same as all its musical notes, or (b) different from the notes.***

Make up your own examples, and try to feel the force of the two alternatives. The logical idea is that there is no third possibility, because “same” and “different” cover all the possibilities.