



Reflect and discuss

# The false idea of who you are



In his short lecture, **The false idea of who you are**, British philosopher Alan Watts reminds us all how “fantastically complex” we are, and how amazing it is to belong so fundamentally in the world.

## Reflect and discuss

Watts says identifying only with our “trouble-shooting” conscious mind means living in “perpetual anxiety.”

- Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- What does living in perpetual anxiety look like to you? Give examples.

“You can feel yourself, not as a stranger in this world, not as something here on probation, not as something arrived here by fluke, but you begin to experience your own existence as absolutely fundamental.”

- Watts uses metaphors to describe different ways of feeling disconnected. What are other metaphors or ways to describe that feeling?
- Have you (or someone you know) ever felt like a “stranger in this world”? If so, what did you/they do to remember you/they belong?
- Indigenous teachings emphasize our ultimate belonging to the land. To what degree is Watts suggesting the same idea?
- Describe what went through your mind when Watts said, “You’re all that, only you’re pretending you’re not.”