

# The Issue of Identification

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**Emily:** Hi, Ted.

I started with Eckhart Tolle in 2009, moved on to Nisargadatta, Ramana and anything else I could get my hands on...

This year I was led to Vedanta, specifically your site and ShiningWorld's. I've been lurking for a while. I know I'm the self/awareness, still working on specifics regarding how everything works though.

So my question is, when it is said that the self identifies with the apparent person instead of just being associated, how is this possible? Is it actually that the intellect identifies with the apparent person, due to the ego, until self-knowledge eradicates ignorance, then it (the intellect) no longer identifies?

Thank you.

~ Emily

**Ted:** Hi, Emily, nice to meet you. And welcome aboard the Vedanta bus. It's not just another movement, and there's nothing and no one to follow, only a truth to be understood and verified through an analysis of your own experience.

With regard to your question, your understanding is correct. The self is pure awareness (i.e. *sat-chit-ananda*, or limitless conscious existence) and not a personal entity that can identify with anything. The mind has a function within it called *ahamkara* (i.e. the ego, or I-thought) that is a most unique thought in that it doesn't think it's a thought, but rather a conscious entity. It is *ahamkara*, and thus the mind, that identifies or believes itself to be an independent volitional entity. When the mind finally assimilates self-knowledge, then that belief is laid to rest and the intellect no longer identifies itself as something real. It continues to exist, but it knows that the fundamental reality upon which its existence as a knowable objective phenomenon depends is pure awareness. Thus the mind realizes the truth that while its functions are limited, its essential nature is limitless.

~ All the best, Ted