

CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPING A SECURE IDENTITY

I WAS SPEAKING TO a colleague about the young daughter of a mutual friend. This girl had recently run away from home, stating that she needed to find herself. My friend commented that he could not understand the impetuosity of youth. He suggested that this girl's father should take her to the nearest mirror and show her herself; she then would be free to address more important pursuits.

Regardless of how chagrined you may feel by such a show of autocracy, it is important to use it to discover whether you feel the same way about who or what the human being is—and if not, whether you have an acceptable alternative for your definition of the person. Many people do what we have seen our ancestors do: accept the presence of something by relegating it to some area of the world that they do not understand. By association, this undefined existent is accepted as part of that complex area. For example, you accept that you think with your brain, yet you do not usually question how this happens. The act of thinking is boxed in with the unknown function of the brain.

You, as any other human being, do not always want to accept that you are just what you observe as a deteriorating body supporting a mind that magically does not deteriorate with the body. You want to be an existent that can function through that sophisticated body, even if you also must be attached to it. You do not always want to be some unknown physical existent, wandering through this life with no measurable objective yet being required to fulfil an obligation to some intangible part of yourself that you are not even sure exists.

Therefore, if the purpose of this work is to help you discover