

See You – A Conversation For The Masses

See you was Depeche Mode's first single written by Martin Gore and it's also their first single that I remember being released; and so it seems the best place to start our first conversation for the masses. It's a fairly unambiguous lyric and so I don't think there is anything to dive into particularly in terms of the meaning behind the song so we will just use the words "All I want to do is see you" as the entry point for this conversation and I am not sure quite where this is going to go. It is probably going to meander all over the place, but I hope it will be a look at being seen, being willing to be seen, allowing ourselves to be seen and when we talk about who is our true self, what does that really mean? And can we ever not even be true self?

So hands up who feels awkward or uncomfortable or vulnerable allowing other people to see who you really are? And now hands up who feels connected to people who are managing their image trying to come across as something they're not people who aren't being authentic and not showing us who they really are?

We all like and respond to authenticity. And we know that we feel more connected to people who are authentic and who aren't afraid to be vulnerable and show us all the parts of themselves including the not so glossy, or the not so confident, or the not so successful parts.

And yet we still fall into the trap ourselves in trying to hide those pieces that we feel aren't good enough and I think this causes a tension as the hiding and the wanting to be seen vie with each other. And more than that, and I am acutely aware of this as a life coach, that we can feel under pressure now to be the real us, to be authentic. And now we've added another layer of thinking into the mix, another should for us to beat ourselves up with.

But I admit it: I want you to feel that marvelous liberation, the freedom that comes from being more of who you really are, doing more of what you want and saying more of what you think and feel. And the secret is that the freedom comes from knowing that it's actually available for you to do that in any given moment and it really doesn't matter which way you choose. Just know that you really can do this. If you feel trapped or stuck if you're feeling like you want to go in one direction and yet the voice of doubt is sending you down another path; if you get an idea to do something and then the voice of doubt is holding you back:

Freedom comes from standing at that crossroads and knowing you have the power to take whichever path you choose, knowing you have the power to take the path of inspiration and knowing it doesn't matter if you don't.

I don't want to swap one pressure for another. Who we are in any given moment, what we do, what we say, how we behave that is our true self. How can it be any other way? If you were capable of being any different in that moment you would. So we know that it is our true self because we can see who we are.

And there's no need to go back and replay the tape over in our head and wish we'd done it differently.

There's no point telling ourselves: if I was being true to myself I would have spoken up. I would have made a more courageous choice.

Our true self is really only who we think we are, really only our idea in any one moment of who we are or what we should have done.

That fear, that voice of fear is so clever. It makes us feel afraid of doing the thing we want to do and then when we give in and we don't follow that path, it makes us feel bad or a failure or not good enough for listening to it. So when we think of who we really are in that scenario, who is the real me?

Is it the voice of wisdom or inspiration or is it the voice of fear? It's all the real me. And I think that sometimes the fear is telling us we're not ready and that's okay. Sometimes what we think is the voice of fear is really actually our wisdom telling us we're putting a should on ourself. We're trying to make ourselves do something we're not ready for.

And I think the conflict comes from not being at peace with who we really are rather than not being who we really are.

But what if there are things you want to do and you're not doing them? What if you do have a dream, a direction you want to go in and the voice of doubt is swaying you away from where you might naturally go? Is there something you should do to help you make those things happen?

I think a better question is, is there something you can do? And I don't think there is. I know there are a lot of coaches out there telling us that if we change our thinking we change our life, telling us to think positively and that we can control our thinking. And I see a lot of those coaches do have successful and seemingly happy and fulfilled lives.

But I don't know if the one necessarily follows the other. I don't think we control our thinking. Where do our thoughts come from? Have you ever had a thought just pop into your head out of nowhere? How did it get there? Did you put it there? And once the train of thought starts up I don't even know to what extent we can control how much focus we put on it; how much attention we give it; whether we can control whether we believe that thought or not; and how much we can even affect whether we act or don't act on that belief.

But my experience since I've come to understand that my thoughts about myself, about other people, about the world, the things I think should or shouldn't happen, pretty much anything and everything, those thoughts are not the news. They're not the truth.

My experience is that there does seem to be some difference in how much weight I give to those thoughts and whether I let them stop me from doing what I want or whether I carry on regardless. Sometimes I do stand up and say the thing or do the thing and sometimes I don't but either way now it's okay.

Because ironically now I realized I have no control over what I think, I feel more in control over what I do.

There are a lot of strands to this conversation. Where does our thinking come from? Who is the I who thinks these thoughts? Who is the I who hears these thoughts? Do we control how much attention we give our thinking? Do we control what we do in response? And I'll be honest. I am not fully equipped to answer these questions.

This is something I really am exploring for myself right now. And a conversation that I want to have with you because I want to open this up for you to consider for yourself. You don't have to believe what I'm saying test it for yourself.

Think about it for yourself. I'm simply describing my experience in the hope that there will be something valuable for you in this.

If you are interested in delving a little bit deeper into these principles. I would recommend a book called Inside Out Revolution by Michael Neill and also The Untethered Soul by Michael Singer.

Although I don't think there is any practice we need to do - I don't think it is journaling or meditating or visualizing or saying affirmations. For me, the answer has been awareness. Awareness of my thinking. And awareness around how I respond to that thinking. Awareness is curative. And it is also cumulative.

And what I mean by that is simply the act of being aware that I am thinking something, rather than receiving a thought as truth is enough to make me have a different experience of that thought. Which in turn can lead to a different outcome. It seems to me anyway.

And when I say it's cumulative what I mean by that is that is the more often I'm aware that I'm thinking, the more I catch myself in that thinking, the more often (again without having to do anything specific to bring this about) the more often I am able to see my thinking for what it is. To see through that thinking. To see the illusion of the thinking.

And it seems to me that in those moments what I receive as the voice of fear has less and less hold over me. Less and less power to stop me.

And let's bring this back to the courage to be seen for who we really are and being our true selves. As I said at the beginning, I think really we can never be anything other than our true self. But if we are to take it to mean following that voice of inspiration, following our inner wisdom, our intuition rather than listening to the voice of doubt and the voice of fear, we will, I think, find ourselves gravitating more and more towards the things we want to do.

Whilst the voice of doubt will never disappear, the voice of fear, the voice of not enough - the inspiration will always feel just that little bit louder, that little bit bigger, that little bit clearer than the doubt. When we live from that place, when we open ourselves up to possibility and inspiration and creativity and play and curiosity and following that road and taking action regardless of whatever thinking is going on underneath, whatever thoughts we have trying to persuade us to the contrary, or trying to veer us off the path, then already we find there isn't any other place to get to we're already exactly where we need to be living in

that freedom that it is that we're seeking. And to me that sums up living life true to ourselves and being seen for who we really are.