

3-2-1 Process for the Shadow



Ken Wilber and the Integral Institute have created a module in their Integral Life Practice program that deals specifically with the Shadow. They recommend a simple technique called the 3-2-1 Process that you can do on your own as often as you like to help you manage your own Shadow tendencies. Remember that the purpose of Shadow work is to incorporate a disowned part of yourself (an “it” into a recognized component of self (an “I”.)

The 3-2-1 Process involves addressing your Shadow part first in the 3rd person (it), then in the 2nd person (you) and finally in the 1st person (I). These steps are summarized as FACE-TALK-BE and here’s how the technique is explained in Wilber’s little instruction book, *The Integral Vision*:

1. *First thing in the morning (before getting out of bed), review your dreams and find someone who showed up with an emotional charge, positive or negative.*
2. *FACE that person, holding them in mind.*
3. *Then TALK to that person, or simply resonate with them.*
4. *Finally BE that person by taking their perspective. For the sake of this exercise there is no need to write anything out—you can go through the whole process right in your mind.*
5. *Before going to bed, choose a person who either disturbed or attracted you during the day. FACE them, TALK to them, and then BE them.*

This technique can be used not only with people who bring up an emotional charge, but also with situations and memories that create a disturbance. For example, suppose that you have a dream in which a stranger is chasing you and you are frantically trying to get away. That stranger may represent some information from your Shadow that is trying to come to your awareness, but your conscious mind is fearful of letting the information get through.

- In the 3-2-1 process you would visualize the same scenario as depicted in your dream, but this time you would stop and FACE the stranger.

- Once you do that you will most likely find that the stranger also stops and simply stares back at you.
- Next you TALK to the stranger and ask what he/she wants you to know.
- Continue looking at the stranger until your fear dissipates. You will begin to recognize that there really is nothing frightening about the situation at all.
- If you can, imagine what the stranger might say to you – it will very likely be something like “I’m just trying to protect you” since protection is one of the functions of the Shadow.
- Whenever you feel you understand this stranger, you can begin to imagine incorporating the traits of the stranger into yourself, as you BE the estranged part.