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VIEWS

You Are Not Your Ego



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While ego can make you aggressive, self-esteem helps you grow. MALLIKA BHATIA points out the differences and tells you how to tame your ego and boost your self-esteem.

If you hold good self-esteem, you like yourself. Others automatically perceive you as likable. You approve of yourself and are in balance overall. Saying 'No' is not a problem when you don't agree with an idea. You are sure of yourself and others around you.

False Sense Of Arrogance

Ego, on the other hand, is defined as "an exaggerated sense of self-importance". Buddhism defines the ego as "an illusive mental phenomenon with which we identify and cling due to ignorance". It is the selfish feeling that "everything is about me and for me". It can become all-consuming, leading to a false sense of grandeur and making one function out of a compulsion to fulfill one's unrealistic desires.

These unrealistic desires are mainly about self and the image one portrays, about being the centre of attention always; about a need for everyone to agree with us. They can also be to get credit for everything, the desire never to be wrong and other self-defeating cravings. When these cravings and desires increase, they lead to greed, jealousy, hatred and a deep sense of insecurity and eventually a blow to where it all started from – the ego.

Most people are unaware of their ego. They are even unaware of the distinction between their self-esteem and ego. According to author Wayne Dyer, "Ego is simply an idea of who you are that you carry around with you". It may be an image that one has created in one's mind. This image may or may not be true but one does everything to preserve that image, getting defensive in the process.

When a person is operating out of ego in any conversation, they will want to be the centre of attention, not truly listen to the other person, often believe they know everything and compassion and respect for others' viewpoint will be missing.

Healthy Sense Of Self-esteem

It is necessary to understand where we use the ego in our everyday behaviour and where we actually function from a healthy sense of self-esteem. As Pastor Nathaniel Boranner Jr puts it, "Ego often has a voracious appetite; the more you feed it, the hungrier it gets." Hence, it is necessary to understand where we use ego in our everyday behavior and where we are actually functioning from a healthy sense of self-esteem.

This is not difficult to develop. Here are a few tips to boost your self-esteem:

- Be open to admitting your faults. No harm in apologising.
- Learn from your mistakes and use feedback for self-improvement.
- Always have a purpose and direction in life and value yourself.
- Try to understand others' viewpoints and respect differences.
- Act respectfully with everyone, even those who work under you.
- Believe that you are good, but there is still scope for improvement,

Need To Be Appreciated

For the ego, the belief is "No one is better than me" and hence, no one can teach me anything new. In an everyday example, when one is operating out of ego, one is often impolite, even rude to people one considers "lower or less important" than oneself. But someone with a healthy self-esteem will always treat everyone with respect. To quote the Bhagavad Gita, "The ego is a false identity crafted to preserve the sense of being the most significant and the most important all the time." In short, it is a narcissistic search for being loved, validated and appreciated."

So remember, your greatest enemy is your own inner perception, your own ego. The ego disguises its feelings as your feelings, its thoughts as your own, and people think it is you. An ego is pseudo and comes from insecurity. Look for the true authentic and secure you.

