

“Do not believe that he who seeks to comfort you lives untroubled among the simple and quiet words that sometimes do you good. His life has much difficulty and sadness and remains far behind yours. Were it otherwise he would never have been able to find those words.

Rainer Rilke

Who do I want to be?

What path will I take?

EGO

What is it?

Freud's Analogy

- Our ego is the rider on a horse, with our unconscious drives representing the animal while the ego tried to direct them.

Modern psychologists

“egotist”

- Someone dangerously focused on themselves and with disregard for anyone else.

Ego

An unhealthy belief in our own importance.

Arrogance

Self-centered ambition.

The need to be better than,

more than,

recognized for,

that's ego.

It's a sense of superiority and certainty that exceeds the bounds of confidence and talent.

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself – And you are the easiest person to fool.

Richard Feynman

Suppressing our ego helps us to be :

- Humble in our aspirations
- Gracious in our success
- Resilient in our failures

Sherman wrote to Grant:

“Be natural and yourself and this glittering flattery will be as the passing breeze of the sea on a warm summer day.”

Among men who rise to fame and leadership two types are recognizable –

- those who are born with a belief in themselves
- those in whom it is a slow growth dependent on actual achievement.

It is poise, not pose.

Talent is only the starting point.

The question is:

- Will you be able to make the most of it?
- Will you be your own worst enemy?
- Will you snuff out the flame that is just getting going?

One might say that the ability to evaluate one's own ability is the most important skill of all.

Without it, improvement is impossible

Keeping Our Ego in Check

It’s easy to be emotionally invested and infatuated with your own work.

Practice seeing yourself with a little distance – get out of your own head.

> Those who know do not speak.
> Those who speak do not know.
>
> Lao Tzu

Talk and hype replace action

The empty text box: “What’s on your mind?”

We seem to think that silence is a sign of weakness.

So we talk, talk, talk as though our life depends on it.

Silence is strength – particularly early on in a journey.

> “Mere gossip anticipates real talk, and to express what is still in thought weakens action by forestalling it.”
>
> Kierkegaard

What is scarce and rare in todays world?

Silence

- The ability to deliberately keep yourself out of the conversation and subsist without it’s validation.
- Silence is the respite of the confident and the strong.

> “A man’s best treasure is a thrifty tongue.”
>
> Hesiod

Talk depletes us.

Talking and doing, fight for the same resources.

TO BE OR TO DO?

Boyd

Whatever we seek to do in life, reality soon intrudes on your idealism.

Often, we fall in love with an image of what success looks like

Appearances are deceiving:

Having authority is not the same as *being* an authority

Having the right and *being* right are not the same either

Impressing people is utterly different from being truly impressive.

DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY

PRIDE, POWER, GREED

Ego crosses out what matters and replaces it with what doesn’t.

What is your purpose?

What are you here to do?

Purpose helps you answer the question, “to be or to do?”

If what matters is *you* – your reputation, your inclusion, your personal ease of life – your path is clear:

> If your purpose is something larger than you – to accomplish something, to prove something to yourself – then suddenly everything becomes easier and more difficult.

It’s about doing, not the recognition.

Being a lifelong student

“It is impossible to learn that which one thinks one already knows”

Epictetus

“When the student is ready, the teacher appears.”

Greatness comes from humble beginnings;

- It comes from grunt work
- It means you are the least important person in the room – until you change that with results

“Say little, do much.”

Pride and ego say:

- I am an entrepreneur because I struck out on my own
- I am going to win because I am currently in the lead
- I am a writer because I published something
- I am rich because I made some money
- I am special because I was chosen.
- I am important because I think I should be.

Genghis Khan instructed his sons and generals:

“If you can’t swallow your pride, you can’t lead.”

“Pride is harder to subdue than a wild lion.”

“Even the tallest mountains have animals that, when they stand on it, are higher than the mountain.”

Is it ten thousand hours or twenty thousand hours to mastery?

Answer -

It doesn’t matter.

Ego is tempting.

- We flirt with arrogance and deceit, and in the process grossly overstate the importance of winning at all cost.
- What is truly ambitious is to face life and proceed with quiet confidence in spite of the distractions.

Always Stay A Student

“Every man I meet is my master in some point, and in that I learn of him.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

- “As our island of knowledge grows, so does the shore of our ignorance”

  John Wheeler

- With accomplishment comes the growing pressure to pretend that we know more than we do.

Know what you don’t know

What's Important to You?

Only you know the race you're running.

Unless your ego decides the only way you have value is if:

you're better than

have more than

everyone, everywhere

- You are the only one who can evaluate and set the terms of your life.
- It's not about beating the other guy. It's not about having more than others.
- It's about being what you are, and being as good as possible at it, without succumbing to all the things that draw you away from it.
- It's about going where you set out to go. About accomplishing the most that you're capable of in what you choose.

So why do you do what you do?

Only then will you understand what matters and what doesn’t.

In your life:

You will be unappreciated.

You will experience failures.

Your expectations will not be met.

You will lose.

You will fail.

How will you carry on?

Change the definition of success:

“Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the *effort* to do your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming.”

In the end, the only way you can appreciate your progress is to stand on the edge of the hole you dug for yourself, look down inside it, and smile fondly at the bloody claw prints that marked your journey up the walls.

- Only ego thinks embarrassment or failure are more than what they are.
- At any given time in the circle of life, we may be aspiring, succeeding, or failing.
- He who will do anything to avoid failure will almost certainly do something worthy of a failure.
- If your reputation can't absorb a few blows, it wasn't worth anything in the first place.

"He who fears death will never do anything worthy of a living man."

Seneca

“Those who drink to the bottom of the cup must expect to meet with some of the dregs.”

Benjamin Franklin

But what if those dregs weren’t so bad?

“People learn from failures.” – seldom do they learn anything from success.

“See much, study much, suffer much, that is the path to wisdom.”

Old Celtic Saying

Wisdom or Ignorance?

Ego is the swing vote