

Part A: Need to Know Ego **p.2**

Exploring ego and egoism with comments by Anthony Damiani from Standing in Your Own Way.

Part B: Resolving Habit Energy **p.8**

Hints on working with old habits that underly the ego, and readings from some masters.

Blue = from notebooks

Green = from PB books

Purple = AD comments mostly SIW

Maroon = other comments NM, ET, R, TT

A. You need to know

An overview of ego and egoism: paras in The Notebooks of Paul Brunton, and comments by Anthony Damiani.

The ego is always in hiding and often in disguise. It is a cunning creature, never showing its own face, so that even the person who wants to destroy its rule is easily tricked into attacking everything else but the ego! Therefore, the first (as well as the final) essential piece of knowledge needed to track it down to its secret lair is how to recognize and identify it.

Notebooks 8.4.391

AD: Listen to that... Long or short path or combination, it doesn't matter. You've got to know what it is you're dealing with--so this knowledge is absolutely vital. Anybody who talks about the nonexistence of the ego, or glorifies it, or says it's illusory, all that is besides the point. Standing in Your Own Way

As we read and discuss these quotes, you'll get a comprehensive picture of what the ego is in terms of its lowest and its highest, the range that it encompasses. On one hand, it's a projection or a manifestation of the Overself. But on the other hand, you can misidentify yourself with the ego and get lost in the net or the web of illusion that it spins out for you.

...So you have to plant yourself firmly in the middle of everything PB says about the ego and go about systematically exploring what he means by it: metaphysically, ontologically, epistemologically, psychologically. You need to see all these various aspects that it has--instead of assuming that you know it just because you feel nice and warm here and there, now and then. Anything that we can understand about it will be to our benefit.

Because this emanated consciousness of the Overself ties itself so completely and so continuously to the thought-series, which after all are its own creations, it identifies itself with the illusory ego produced by their activity and forgets its own larger, less limited origin. 8.2.47
AD: On the one hand, you have the I Am which is present in the matrix of thoughts. And then the matrix of thoughts takes itself to be the I Am, which it is not. That will account for egoism. The consequences are inevitable. Once you accept the congeries of thoughts with that light fused into it as separate, each one is going to think itself superior to every other one. And each thought does. Just like each ego thinks itself superior to every other one." P.22

Ego: matrix of thoughts, emotions, images

There is no real ego but only a quick succession of thoughts which constitutes the "I" process. There is no separate entity forming the personal consciousness but only a series of impressions, ideas, images revolving round a common center. The latter is completely empty; the feeling of something being there derives from a totally different plane--that of the Overself. 8.2.31

AD: "I call it a matrix of possibilities actualizing themselves continuously and uninterruptedly and believing in that actualization. What you call your identity is this constant, incessant process of one thought following another. Don't think of it as a thing...."

AD: “just look into yourself, just stop for a moment. Haven’t you noticed that it’s always there, the emptiness you’re running away from ? ... A big black hole in you, did you ever notice it? Or don’t you even look that way?. P. 19 Standing in Your Own Way

Ego and consciousness

What is the ego but the Overself surrounded with barriers, conditioned by its instruments--the body, the feelings, and the intellect--and forgetful of its own nature? 8.1.6

The Overself-consciousness is reflected into the ego, which then imagines that it has its own original, and not derived awareness. 1.32

The ego borrows its reality, its power of perception its very capacity to be aware, from its association with the Overself. 8.1.28

AD: The nature of the soul's consciousness is unchanging. What about the nature of the ego? It's changing from instant to instant. Understand the nature of the consciousness that the ego represents, that is from moment to moment...understand the nature of the consciousness which is always abiding, never changing... understand this interrelationship. Standing in Your Own Way

When it is declared that the ego is a fictitious entity, what is meant is that it does not exist as a real entity. Nevertheless, it does exist as a thought. (8:2.32)

I-ness:

The root of all the trouble is not man's wickedness or animality or cunning greedy mind. It is his very I-ness, for all those other evils grow out of it. it is his own ego. Here is the extraordinary and baffling self-contradiction of the human situation. it is man's individual existence which brings him suffering and yet it is this very existence which he holds as dear as life to him. P 139

The ego is by nature a deceiver and in its operations a liar. For if it revealed things as they really are, or told what is profoundly true, it would have to expose its own self as the arch-trickster pretending to be the man himself and proffering the illusion of happiness. 8.3.79

Egoism: Self-separation of thoughts

The ego is after all only an idea. It derives its seeming actuality from a higher source. If we make the inner effort to search for its origin we shall eventually find the Mind in which this idea originated. That mind is the Overself. This search is the Quest. The self-separation of the idea from the mind which makes its existence possible, is egoism. (8:1.9)

The personal ego of man forms itself out of the impersonal life of the universe like a wave forming itself out of the ocean. It constricts, confines, restricts, and limits that infinite life to a small finite area. The wave does just the same to the water of the ocean. The ego shuts out so much of the power and intelligence contained in the universal being that it seems to belong to an entirely different and utterly inferior order of existence. The wave, too, since it forms itself

only on the surface of the water gives no indication in its tiny stature of the tremendous depth and breadth and volume of water beneath it. The work of the quest is simply this: to free the ego from its self-imposed limitations, to let the wave of conscious being subside and straighten itself out into the waters whence it came. The little wave is thus reconverted into the infinite Overself. 8.1.102

AD: Once it takes itself to be that bundle of thoughts, it cuts itself off from the ocean.

S: How could that idea take itself to be anything else than what it is?

AD: Self-will. To your first question, self-will. Go over what you said: What is there in it that makes it take itself to be other than it is? You've got to look it straight in the eyes

Standing in Your Own Way

Egoism: powerful habit energy

This wrong self-identification is not only a metaphysical error but also a mental habit. We may correct the error intellectually but we shall still have to deal with the habit. So deeply ingrained is it that only a total effort can successfully alter it. That effort is called the Quest. P9

AD: It's the emotional attachment to this separateness that is the problem. The ego is dependent on that emotional attachment to its separateness. That's what keeps it going. Otherwise if a person could understand that metaphysically--he should be released. Right? But it doesn't work like that. The emotional attachment persists. If that emotional support was taken away, you would feel like you were falling into an abyss. Standing in Your Way

The ego is a collection of thoughts circulating around a fixed but empty centre. If the habits of many, many reincarnations had not given them such strength and persistence, they could be voided. The reality--MIND--could then reveal Itself. 8.2.37

AD: The constant self-reconstitution of a self is what PB calls ego. "it can provide itself with all the necessary means and material to persist in its own identity."

The ego has been around as long as the Overself has been projecting itself and manifesting through some kind of life. The residue of that living is a strong tendency, or matrix of habits, which is not a real entity, but powerful enough to keep you from recognizing yourself." Standing in Your Own Way P.12

Repeated thoughts and actions become tendencies, tendencies become habits and habit shapes our world experience. Over a long period of time, the habits and emotional residue of ego activity become very strong. The habit energies are beneath or upstream of conscious thought, volition, feeling. A vast underground matrix of habit energy which supports the ego.

It is not enough to change our conscious states of mind without dissolving the habit energies which drive these states. Just try to change a habit--see how hard it is to change your mind.

Seeds we plant in the mind as thought, feeling, volition ripen as consequences, and

further condition thought. This cycle is driven by the energy of habit energies

B. WORKING WITH HABIT ENERGY

RAPHAEL: Beyond the illusion of the ego P.39-40

“It may happen that psychological contents appear within our (mind). More precisely, these contents are qualified energy coagulates possessing a certain amount of power and persistence sufficient to condition (us). Some ... may totally enslave and frustrate us. ...our consciousness may have great difficulty in keeping its balance... Let us propose a few operational methods.

- a. Through the power of sound, mantra, we can disaggregate the coagulate. This is an immediate, precise and dynamic act.
- b. We can accept and integrate (the coagulated energy) into pure consciousness; of course we would need to have a suitable solar state of consciousness
- c. We can slow down the rhythm of that content, and remove energy from it, and in so doing neutralize it completely.
- d. We can use an energy having a quality opposite to that of the coagulate. In that case we obtain a sort of alchemical transmutation.
- e. We can say that traditional knowledge is a fifth operative method... sufficient to devitalize, neutralize and dissolve any possible “other” that may appear.”

“what we have to avoid is to fight that content in a frontal way. These methods of operation must be expressed with “determined calmness”, with awareness and loving firmness. ... In addition, we should not judge or blame, nor justify, the content.”

“The *mantra* disintegrates the form, Knowledge ... dissolves, Love draws to itself all it touches, integrating and resolving.”

“The realizative process consists in dissolving coagulated forms (qualitative individuated contents), slowing down the movement of form/substance/energy, and then resolving form/substance/energy into consciousness.”

See also Raphael: Yoga: its nature and purpose

From Tarthang Tulku Openness Mind: Self-image

Our natural state of being is awareness: an awareness which is not of anything but which is an all-encompassing state of pure experience. We are not, however, able to stay in this awareness...it gives way to ordinary consciousness, which divides our perception into subject and object, creating as subject a self-image, the “I”.But what actually is this “I?”

The “I” is simply an image which the mind has projected. ... yet we take it as real, and let it run our lives.

Under the influence of the self-image we perpetuate this subject-object orientation. As soon as we identify, comparison begins; grasping and selfishness follow. Then the mind makes

discriminations and judgments which cause conflicts. The self-image gives energy to these conflicts and these conflicts in turn feed the self-image. The self-image thus perpetuates itself, tending to filter experience in ways that allow only its own rigid constructions room to function. Neither open nor accepting, the self-image imprisons us in blockages and constrictions. Our natural flow of energy is interrupted and the range of our responsiveness and the depth of our experience are severely limited.

To free ourselves... we must first see that the self-image is not a genuine part of us, that we do not heed it, and that, in fact, the self-image obscures our true being. One way to do this is to step back and observe... Look at the grasping nature of the self-image: it is always making demands, always wanting more and more. 12-13

We can change.

For example, every time you feel unhappy, say "I am happy." Remember, it is your self-image that is unhappy, not you. It is possible to switch instantly to a happy, balanced attitude, and to stay there by believing it.

Another way ...is to become immersed in the unhappiness, feel it, and believe it, and then switch it swiftly, electrically. First be it completely, then jump to the opposite extreme. Then it is our choice: to follow the self-image which makes us its prisoners, or to develop a positive attitude which brings lightness, fullness and wholeness. ... no expectations, no frustrations, no dominating self-image takes us away from the immediacy of our being. Obstacles and distractions no longer divide our feelings and our mind. The choice is ours; we have only to choose the way of freedom. 15-16

We can challenge the concept of fear itself. As our consciousness goes into the emotion, we become aware that what we are feeling is simply energy. We see that everything that occurs is a manifestation of energy, which itself is a form of our awareness.

Finding Love

If you feel that love is missing from your life, you can create the positive warmth of love within your heart. Let yourself feel this inner flow; expand it, letting it touch all your experience with a gentler happiness. The more you do this, the more love you discover within, and the more you have to offer others. You can become truly self-sufficient, not needing to rely on family, friends, or lovers. No longer must your relationships be based on insecurity or emptiness; you can be free to express your feelings fully, and to deeply appreciate yourself and those around you. As you develop the ability to contact this caring within your heart, you can use its energies to maintain balance in your life. Whenever you feel depressed or hopeless, use love to transform these feelings. If you find yourself going to the other extreme of excitement and exhilaration, find a stable peace in the warmth within. The more you nurture yourself in this way, the stronger your self-confidence will be; you will develop a certainty as indestructible as a diamond. You will find within yourself your own best protector and friend. P.57

Visualize a vast open space, by thinking of all external objects as well as our bodies as being part of this space, all within the immediate moment. Finally, no barriers remain. Only a higher awareness alive and healing which gives warmth and nourishment.

Allowing Yourself To Feel Love (exercise)

To feel love, generate love.

Put your hand on your heart.

Bring attention to the heart region a few minutes

Allow yourself to feel whatever you feel.

Be aware of whatever you are feeling, without judging.

Allow the contents there to have space, notice space in which they live.

Think of a beloved one saying your name.

Allow yourself to feel the love of and for the loved one.

Allow yourself to feel, without fear repelling, or clinging attracting.

Allow the feeling to spread to your whole body.

Allow the feeling to spread, to your friends in the room.

Allow the feeling to spread to the entire universe.

From Eckhart Tolle: A New Earth:

The root of the problem is our misplaced sense of “I.” It does not really refer to the ego-person. If we limit the meaning of I to the finite person ego, we miss the most important dimension of our being.

We have a story, which is not fact. Freedom is freedom from the unhappy story. A New Earth 26-27

The greatest impediment to finding the experiencer is to lose yourself in the experience. You are not the contents of experience. “Can you sense your essential beingness, the I-Am, that I am at this moment? Although you can’t know consciousness as content, you can become aware of it as yourself. Between and behind the words, and sounds, and noise. It is what they all point to, stillness, underlying sense of I-Am. A New Earth. P. 192

The dreamer is not the person. The person is part of the dream. The dreamer is the substratum in which the dream (and dream person) appears, that which makes the dream possible. ... the dreamer is consciousness itself—who (what) you are. p,210

The elimination of time from your consciousness is the elimination of ego. What we are speaking of is the elimination of psychological time, which is the egoic mind’s endless preoccupation with past and future. ... Past or future moments only exist when you remember or anticipate them, and you do so by thinking about them in the only moment there is: this one. A New Earth

Nonreaction to the ego in others is one of the most effective ways not only of going beyond ego in yourself but also of dissolving the collective human ego. A New Earth

On the new earth, enjoyment will replace wanting as the motivating power... Wanting arises from the ego’s delusion that you are a separate fragment that is disconnected from the power that lies behind all manifestation. Through enjoyment you link into that universal creative power itself.

Read the first three chapters of The Power of Now

C. C. INQUIRY and AWARENESS

In Philosophic yoga inquiry and stillness complement each other. The sages all agree on this: no effort is needed to get real, but the obstacles to realization are deeply affected by inquiry. Look deeply into what you are not and recognize what you are.

Self inquiry is questioning. You really are. But you are not what you think you are. We all say I, we have a sense of “self” or “I.” What does the “I” point to? Am I the face in the mirror, or a vast black emptiness through and in which thought and sensation are streaming? Is it so? Looking deeply into the ego, the story, the mind shows you what you are not. You need to know enough about what you are not to recognize what you are. It is freeing.

***Self-Inquiry** is more than thinking. It is looking deeply into the nature of the mind, attention turned back on itself. It is being with yourself. The inquiry into mind is a transformation of the mind. We cannot know the mind the way we know the world, yet the fact of our knowing anything is evidence of the knowing principle: awareness.*

Thought can ask the question “what am I?” but it can never really give the answer. But it can invite an answer. Awareness, the seeker, must recognize itself. So at some point our inquiry itself lets go and listens for a response. A great saying: think deeply and put thinking aside.

Once you see what you are not, you begin to let go. And when you let go of the conditioning, stop resisting and reacting, you are free to be what you are. This is detachment. Then the deeper purpose of the ego as part of the world-idea begins to reveal itself.

For our self-inquiry, we explore excerpts from “The Secret of the I” from PB’s Wisdom of the Overself, supplemented by paras from The Notebooks.

Use the essay in booklet 1 on meditation, and PB’s The Secret Path, as a guide to the intuitive meditative part of the inquiry.

PB’s The Quest of the Overself provides a great, and more detailed inquiry, for those who would like it..