

Understanding the Ego and the Spiritual Ego

By Brian E. Neal

We hear the term “ego” quite often. Spiritual teachers, philosophers and many psychologists all talk about it, but there is a lot of information out there and much of it can send mixed messages about what exactly the ego is and how to deal with it.

Many of these people talk about ego-death or killing your ego. This is certainly one way to look at it, but it can be misleading because in truth there is no way to actually get rid of the ego. We can only teach it to be disciplined and work with us, rather than against us.

So, I believe it’s important to view the ego in a compassionate light, as that’s the only way we’re ever going to be able to work with it.

The ego is, in the simplest of terms, the identity formed by the mind.

One of my favorite descriptions of the ego comes from Wayne Dyer, as he said the ego is any part of “you” that believes:

1. I am what I have.
2. I am what I do.
3. I am what others think of me.
4. I am separate from everyone.
5. I am separate from all that is missing in my life.
6. I am separate from God.

When we are young children, we do not have an ego. Prior to around Age 7, the mind hasn’t developed enough to have its own identity and thoughts. But from that time on, our subconscious mind is programmed and conditioned to believe certain things to be true based on our experiences and what we’re told about how the world works and our place in it. Ultimately, the subconscious mind is a neutral thing, but it is always taking in the information from its surroundings. If we are surrounded by love and positivity, our subconscious is programmed to become very loving and positive. However, if we are around a lot of stress, criticism, reaction, pain, or anything rather negative, our subconscious is programmed or conditioned to become quite negative and judgmental. Whatever we’re exposed to the most growing up—especially from our guardians or parents and the most influential people in our lives—becomes our inner voice.

If we are not taught how to understand our minds, we can become totally identified with the mind and its thoughts as we grow older.

What I want you to understand right now is that you are not the mind. The mind is a supercomputer, and it spits out what it’s been programmed to think. Meaning, every time you

start to feel bad or a triggering situation comes up and the mind begins to race, these thoughts are not the real you, and you do not have to believe them. These thoughts are the conditioned thoughts based on past experiences.

Think about this: If you can observe the mind and its thoughts, how can you be the mind and its thoughts? Surely, if you were that, you would not be able to observe it from a neutral, higher perspective. But if you take the time to simply observe your mind, it's not hard to realize that it thinks all on its own all the time.

The mind is the thinker. The only time that the real you is thinking is when you're intentionally, consciously telling yourself something in your mind. It's on purpose. If your mind is just racing, that's simply the monkey mind—the ego.

So, the ego is the identity that the mind builds over time. It is the thinker. And if you've been raised to understand the world like the majority of the population (90-plus-percent of us), the mind's identity will look something like this:

“My name is [insert name here], and I am me, this body and mind.”

And if you ask the ego to tell you who it is, it'll start listing the things that it does for work and what school it went to and who it's in a relationship with and, for some, perhaps even this whole story about how it came to be that way.

But if you are not the mind or the ego, and instead the observer or awareness above it, then how do we begin to stop living from the ego's identity?

This is the process known as ego-death or destroying the ego.

In this process, we aren't actually “killing” the ego. The ego cannot die. It's a part of the mind. But what we can do, since the subconscious mind is ultimately a neutral thing, is reprogram it to have a more useful ego. This is part of the process of self-mastery.

I like to think about it as programming your ego to be your best friend, to love the real you.

If our ego has mostly been programmed by our environment throughout our life, that means it was not programmed consciously by you to begin with. But that doesn't mean you do not have the ability to reprogram it consciously. In fact, it's quite possible and not as difficult as you might believe. But it does take commitment and persistence.

You see, the subconscious mind learns through repetition. What you put your focus on consistently is what's being programmed. If your mind is quite negative, judgmental, and critical, it's time to start putting your focus on more positive, loving, and affirming subjects and content. If your mind is constantly telling you what's wrong, it's time to start correcting the mind every time it begins to complain. Rather than letting it run rampant without paying it much attention, when you notice your mind beginning to ramble on incessantly about

something negative, simply observe it from as neutral a place as possible. Begin to ask yourself, where did this mind learn to think like this? Do I want it to think like this?

And once you've become aware of what it's saying regularly, learn how to intentionally flip that negative inner dialogue.

If your mind likes to judge your appearance frequently, begin to notice when it does that, and instead tell yourself something loving and truthful, such as:

- I am perfect just the way I am.
- I am me, and I love myself.
- I am attractive and desirable.
- I love my body.
- I am grateful to be me.

With some of these phrases, you may feel resistance at first because your subconscious mind doesn't totally believe it yet. Try to say things that you don't feel any resistance to. If you have a lot of resistance (meaning it feels hard to believe it or unpleasant while saying it to yourself), find a phrase that is still positive but more believable to you. If saying something like, "I am attractive and desirable" has too much resistance, try something like, "I am perfect just the way I am." It's entirely true that you're perfect the way you are. And it is one thing that is completely out of your control, so it's totally illogical to not, at the very least, accept yourself as you are. You are who you are for a reason, and if we can accept that it's perfect just the way it is, then we can stop the pointless wishing to be someone else. You're on this journey as yourself for a specific purpose. It's not random. You truly are perfect the way you are. Embrace that.

In fact, the only thing causing the resistance is the lack of familiarity with the idea. Resistance does not mean that the affirmation is untrue. It simply means that the subconscious is unfamiliar with thinking that way, and currently believes the opposite to be true. But even with all that negative momentum on a particular topic within the mind, it is possible with consistency to shift that energy from a negative place to a neutral one, and eventually to a positive and loving place. It only takes time and persistence.

So, you are not the mind and its thoughts, and you are not the ego.

Who you truly are is the awareness behind those things, the consciousness experiencing those things. You are not just a human being with a body and a mind, but an eternal spiritual being having a human experience in partnership with this body and mind. We must shift this internal paradigm in order to fully understand who we are.

In fact, you can know this to be true if you commit to reprogramming the subconscious. It will become more and more apparent that you are separate from the mind as you begin to reprogram the subconscious identity and let the old conditioning fall away.

I like to think of this process as more of a shattering of the ego and its delusions, rather than a destroying or killing of the ego. We break it down so that we can build it back up consciously.

The ego feels the need to control things, and one of the things it feels it has control over is its identity. But once you begin to tell it the truth, it will be resistant at first. This is because it is afraid. It's afraid that if it doesn't know exactly who it is in this world and in terms of this world, that it will cease to exist. But there's no need to let that fear run wild.

Here's the truth: We've been identifying as all these temporary human experiences our whole life. And when anything changes, the ego freaks out because it has to change its identity. This is why so many of us fear change. We're conditioned to feel fear during any changes in our lives. So, instead of having an ego programmed to identify as all these temporary labels and ideas of who it is, we need to teach the ego to identify as the unchanging ideas of who we are.

The ego has had a need to control things. But it's always trying to control things that it never had any real control over, such as other people, what happens in life, and the outcomes throughout life.

The only true control we have in this world is over ourselves, and the only way to gain that control is by teaching the ego to become the servant, rather than the master. We must take back the reigns. This is what it means to become empowered or claim back your power. The ego must know that we are in charge, but if it surrenders to you, we can become best friends and actually enjoy this ride, rather than simply survive it. Reprogramming the ego is ultimately about going from surviving to thriving—from going through the motions and everyday feeling the same as the one before to consciously living and doing the things that make us feel alive and excited to be here.

We can teach the ego that we are the eternal consciousness experiencing it right now. We can tell the ego that its best qualities will live on in us forever. So, even though it is temporary, it will forever exist within us. It wants to be controlled. It wants parameters and boundaries.

At the end of the day, the ego really only ever wanted to know that it belonged in this world. All it wanted to know was that it was loved and had value and was worthy of existence. And during this process, we can teach it that if it will stop trying to control everything and instead work with us, that this whole experience will be so much more wonderful and enjoyable, for the rest of this lifetime.

That is the ego, and the basics of how it operates and why we should reprogram it.

Now, I want to talk about the spiritual ego.

As people awaken and begin to realize that they are an eternal spiritual being, One with Source and consciousness itself, a new type of ego may arise. This is known as the spiritual ego.

When we begin to awaken, the ego can take on this new role and start to look at new ways to compare itself to others.

You see, it is very easy to fall into the mindset of: “Wow, I’m awake and finally understand who I am; look at all these sheep, still asleep, still unconscious to who they are.”

And there are many concepts out there in the spiritual community that reinforce this mindset, such as the idea of the Chosen Ones, Starseeds, etc.

The Chosen Ones are based on Biblical texts, where it is foretold in Revelations about these End Days, and the 144,000 are the army of God who will come to save humanity.

It is true that we are currently living in the times being talked about in Revelations— however, there aren’t only 144,000 special people who wake up now and save the planet or whatever, and these also aren’t the “End Times.” We are living at the end of a long chapter in Earth’s history where fear and control dominated the planet. But this isn’t the apocalypse; rather, it is a transition from a fear-based society to a love- and trust-based society, that allows individuals to choose how and where they live freely. And the 144,000 is representative of how few people need to wake up to shift the consciousness and create a domino effect that helps all the others to awaken.

We are all One, and humanity has a shared consciousness within the entire collective consciousness of all existence. Waking up early doesn’t make you more special than anyone else. You’re simply at a different part of the journey.

If you are here and your soul is more evolved and able to wake up earlier than someone else, we must remember that we were at that less evolved place before many times in the past. If you’re an old soul with wisdom beyond your Earthly years, it only implies that you’ve lived many lives in which you were unconscious and just going through the karmic cycles for soul growth. If you refuse to understand that and have compassion for someone who’s yet to awaken, you’re failing to see yourself in them. It’s time to put yourself in their shoes, and also realize that for much of this life, you were asleep to your true nature as well. Those of us who are beginning to remember who we really are now must remain humble. It’s imperative to waking up fully and being able to serve a purpose that helps others.

“Starseed” is a term used to describe someone who resonates with the idea that they are already a higher-dimensional being in this Universe, and they sent their consciousness into this incarnation to help raise the frequency of the planet. So, they believe they are already an advanced alien lifeform—from such races as the Pleiadians, Sirians, Arcturians, Lyrans, and the like—and that they came here to help the planet at this time.

This idea can be very exciting to explore, and I’m not saying it isn’t true. But this can also feed the spiritual ego and make us think that we’re somehow separate or above the rest of humanity.

This is a dangerous path that will take you further away from the real reasons why you came here during this time.

The truth is, if you are here right now, and especially if you are an older soul who has already ascended before, then your true self understands that we're all One and that Unconditional Love is the foundation of our existence. But you must remember and embody that truth if you're going to step into your purpose and help awaken the rest of humanity.

We are not above or below anyone else. It doesn't matter where you are on your journey.

After all, in eternity, time doesn't exist. Everything exists already, in the same moment, just at a different frequency and reality. The future self, the higher self, of everyone already exists. It doesn't matter if this particular incarnation from a linear perspective is the 10th or the 10,000th. We all go through this evolutionary process of consciousness. Your place on the journey doesn't make you any more valuable or worthy or special compared to anyone else. We are all heading in the same direction. The only differences in our lives are the point in the journey, the expression, and the experience.

Some people in this lifetime are remembering who they are for the 100th time. Some people are remembering who they are for the first time. Both are valid and wonderful experiences. Both are necessary and loved as part of the whole.

So, as we ascend, it's important to recognize that spiritual ego and keep it in check. Ultimately, the spiritual ego is fueled by something the Alchemists call Luciferian Energy. It's an energy that resents humanity and thinks of itself as holier-than-thou or self-righteous. It's a high horse that we're destined to fall off eventually.

Remember, we are all One. Even if you are in a stage where unconsciousness disturbs you, put yourself in their shoes and recognize that you were not immune to that. The spiritual ego is a sign that we must humble ourselves and seek more compassion for our old self. Ultimately, the reason we judge those who are asleep so harshly is because we are still not at peace with the fact that we lived so unconsciously for so long. The ego wants to feel special to make up for all the suffering it has endured, because it hasn't accepted that all that suffering served the purpose in waking you up to begin with.

When in doubt, always come back to love, compassion, peace, and forgiveness. These are the pillars of a higher level of consciousness. If we are judging and comparing ourselves to others in any negative way, that is the ego.

Let it go.

Forgive.

Love.

If you are awakening to your true nature, that's what matters. That's what helps the rest of humanity ascend. That's why you are here in the first place.

Be the example. Be the light that you are.