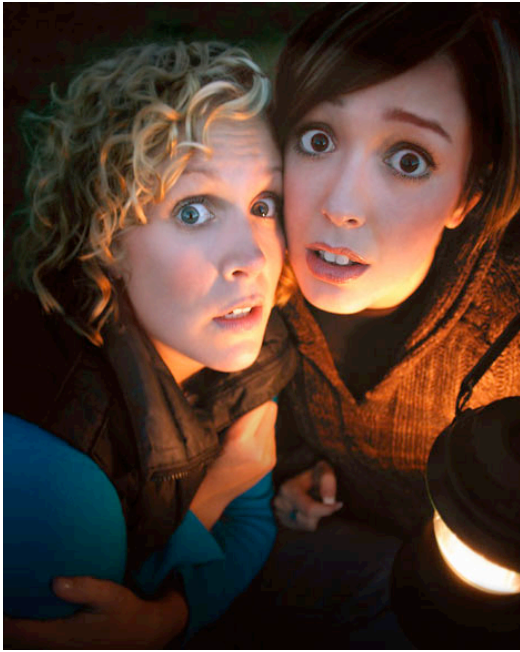


Ego and Essence

If you continuously feel and understand, and the understanding that the ego is the cause becomes so deep-rooted, one day you will suddenly see that it has disappeared. Nobody drops it - nobody can drop it. You simply see; it has simply disappeared, because the very understanding that ego causes all misery becomes the dropping. THE VERY UNDERSTANDING IS THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE EGO.
- Osho, *Beyond the Frontier of the Mind*

Look within yourself and you will discover two opposing forces. One fills you with fear, insecurity, shame, worry, unworthiness, a sense that you are in danger, that you are at stake here and must do everything correctly. This experience of oneself as in danger and missing something is what is called **Ego**, the small, afraid, defended self who cannot risk being real, telling the truth, following its own instinct – the place in us that is tempted to dishonor who we are by greediness, separation, trying to get something, and experiencing victimization. From this place, we are tempted by the proverbial “deal with the Devil” – in which we give up our souls and sell ourselves out for security/approval/money/fame. Here there is a great sense of being in danger. And frightened people are controllable people.



When we are invested in propping up our identity, much is always at stake, everything is a problem, and self worth is always on the line.

The Ego's basic position is that something is very wrong, that Life is dangerous, and anxiety is the default position. This is the voice that is constantly playing in your head, seducing you into believing the stories that it tells, which are based on conditioned programming from the past. The Ego is always in search of food - attention, achievement, approval - and yet no amount of these satisfies for long. We can see Ego everywhere - in governments that prioritize endless wars while schools and social services deteriorate for lack of funds, in religions that teach us shame, unworthiness, hatred and intolerance, in media's focus on that which instills fear in us. This manifests as soulless business without integrity, worshipping of monetary gain above all else, killing for an ideology that has been programmed into us, marginalizing segments of society we feel superior to.

Essence refers to the pure consciousness that we are - that clear, peaceful place of wholeness that is always present, always complete in us. When our attention can rest in this wholeness, suffering disappears and nothing needs to be attained or let go. Life is experienced as pleasurable, challenges do not become problems since nothing is at stake. This is our natural state of Being. This is the voice that points us to the experience of peace, gratitude and trust, and gives us the freedom to be authentic, act from integrity, and serving the whole. **Essence** is where true security and stability reside, this is the foundation that supports us, this is where the courage to be who we truly are is found.



Ego attempts to replace **Essence** by trying to imitate it (e.g., loss of inner security is replaced by trying to create external security, loss of a sense of perfection is replaced by perfectionism). But since Ego is based on an imagined self and is not inherently real, it always screws it up. Always. (This explains, for instance, the strangulation of bureaucracies and governments, which are themselves perfect metaphors for the Ego itself).

How does it happen that we “fall from the Garden of Eden”, Essence, and learn to identify with Ego as “me”?

When we are born we have no sense of "I am this or that", no concept of male/female or any idea of how we are "supposed" to be. We know only our natural state, and how to express that. The idea of who we are comes from others. Our senses are geared to the outside, and very early we begin to become shaped by the opinions of others - we are beautiful or not, we are good or bad, we are delightful or burdensome. This is not our own direct experience of ourselves, our center is being shaped and defined by others. This center is false, because your real center is never influenced by the opinions or desires of others. Nobody shapes this real center, you are born with it. Osho continues,

So you have two centers. One center you come with, which is given by existence itself. That is the self. And the other center, which is created by the society, is the ego. It is a false thing - and it is a very great trick. Through the ego the society is controlling you. You have to behave in a certain way, because only then does the society appreciate you, and if it doesn't, your ego will be shaken. And when the ego is shaken, you don't know who you are.



The greatest addiction of all is to the Ego, in giving reality to its seduction and fascinating stories, its endless creative ways of luring us into its trance again and again. Some schools of thought try to "kill" the Ego, or make it go away. Ain't gonna happen. Ego thrives in struggle and conflict. Other pathways seek salvation in changing external circumstances, believing that this will somehow ease egoic demands. Also futile. While there is nothing wrong with upgrading circumstances if you can, this is unrelated to breaking the control of the Ego. Circumstances are never the problem, and changing them is never the solution. Many Tibetan monks sent to Chinese work camps see this as a great opportunity to demonstrate their faith and remain true to themselves under the harshest of conditions. And many who have attained great success and status in the world are among the most anguished - such as the continuing expositions of duplicity from politicians, or the repeated self destructive behavior of rock stars. The resolution of this divergence is the central point of human existence, it is what makes the human experience qualitatively different from all other incarnations on this plane.

What then do we do with the situation of enslavement to the Ego's stories? It is possible to find our way to the place where choice exists. There is within us a force that is stronger than the pull of Ego in which we can center ourselves. This will require a summoning of the will, and a willingness to face the Ego directly and learn to move our attention, our identity, to something deeper, more real and more central. If we are willing to face the false that runs us, to loosen the grip of who we have been taught to believe we are, we can come Home again. Osho concludes,

The real can be known only through the false, so the ego is a must. One has to pass through it. It is a discipline. The real can be known only through the illusion. You cannot know the truth directly. First you have to encounter the untrue. Through that encounter you become capable of knowing the truth. If you know the false as the false, truth will dawn upon you. Once you come near it, everything changes, everything settles again. But now this settling is not done by the society. Now everything becomes a cosmos, not a chaos; a new order arises. But this is no longer the order of the society - it is the very order of existence itself.