

The Battle of the EGOS

Let Your Conscience be Your Guide

By Rick R.

I've haven't had too many problems with *places* or *things*. My problems have always been with the *people in those places and the ones that owned those things*. It has always been *THOSE OTHER PEOPLE*. (Pg. 268 As Bill Sees it) When I first entered AA, I learned that one of the symptoms of alcoholism was our inability to form a true partnership with another human being. (Pg. 77) Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) I could be your pal if you were willing to see it my way. Most of the people I knew got tired of me and pulled away. I had to explain why they deserted me, so I went about pointing out all their faults while Rationalizing (making a socially acceptable excuse for a socially unacceptable behavior) my own behavior. I never felt good about myself after behaving that way, but I could not face the idea of admitting that I was the problem.

One evening, I was talking to a friend of mine about this topic, and he said: "*all forms of criticism and character assignation stem from low self-esteem*". I heard another person say, "*there are two ways to get the tallest building in town, 1. Build the tallest building or 2. Tear all the other buildings down*". The low self-esteem comment stopped me in my tracks. I knew I had to restrain my tongue if I was ever going to overcome the insecurity inside of me. I was going to have to rely on my own merits if I was ever going to have a healthy self-image.

All people have natural-instinct to protect themselves and often they overreact and do and say things that cause others to react in kind. This can cause damage to any relationship, and sometimes can destroy a friendship. *I am in the program of A.A. to heal myself* so it's my responsibility to cut off my own escape and take the initiative to deal with my side of the action *whether the other person cooperates or not*. If I want to--- have the best possible relationship with every human being I know, it's up to me and I had to *stop judging people by their surface behavior, look deeper and try to understand how they are conditioned to behave the way they do*. This gives me the strength to be empathetic and not aggravate the situation. We all make mistakes and today I don't let my EGO compound the problem. When I let myself get into a confrontation with another person who has problems like I do, all I am saying is, "*I'LL BET MY EGO CAN WHIP YOUR EGO*".

It's a long and slow process, and it requires constant attention to details on my part. I try to give everyone amnesty. I apply the golden rule in every situation. I use the ST. Francis prayer for inspiration. I refuse to pile on when another person is a little off his/her game. If that person is still willing to cross my boundaries and cause me grief, I can remove myself and detach without condemning the other person as I withdraw. I do not discuss his faults to others when he's not present. (No gossip) And most of all, I must be satisfied with *delayed gratification*. It may take years before anyone appreciates the changes that I have made, and when they do, it makes it even more gratifying. Today I am nobody's adversary; I am nobody's victim; and I am nobody's perpetrator. I know that *my ego* doesn't like the way I live today, but *my conscience* gets the final say.