

## 21 Masks of the Ego

### Introduction to the Ego

Everything came from the creation. In the beginning, there was nothing, or the void—there was only God; only oneness. And God wanted to exist and interact with something, so he created the World with the great force of separation. Creation was born of separation, and what is created is still pure God.

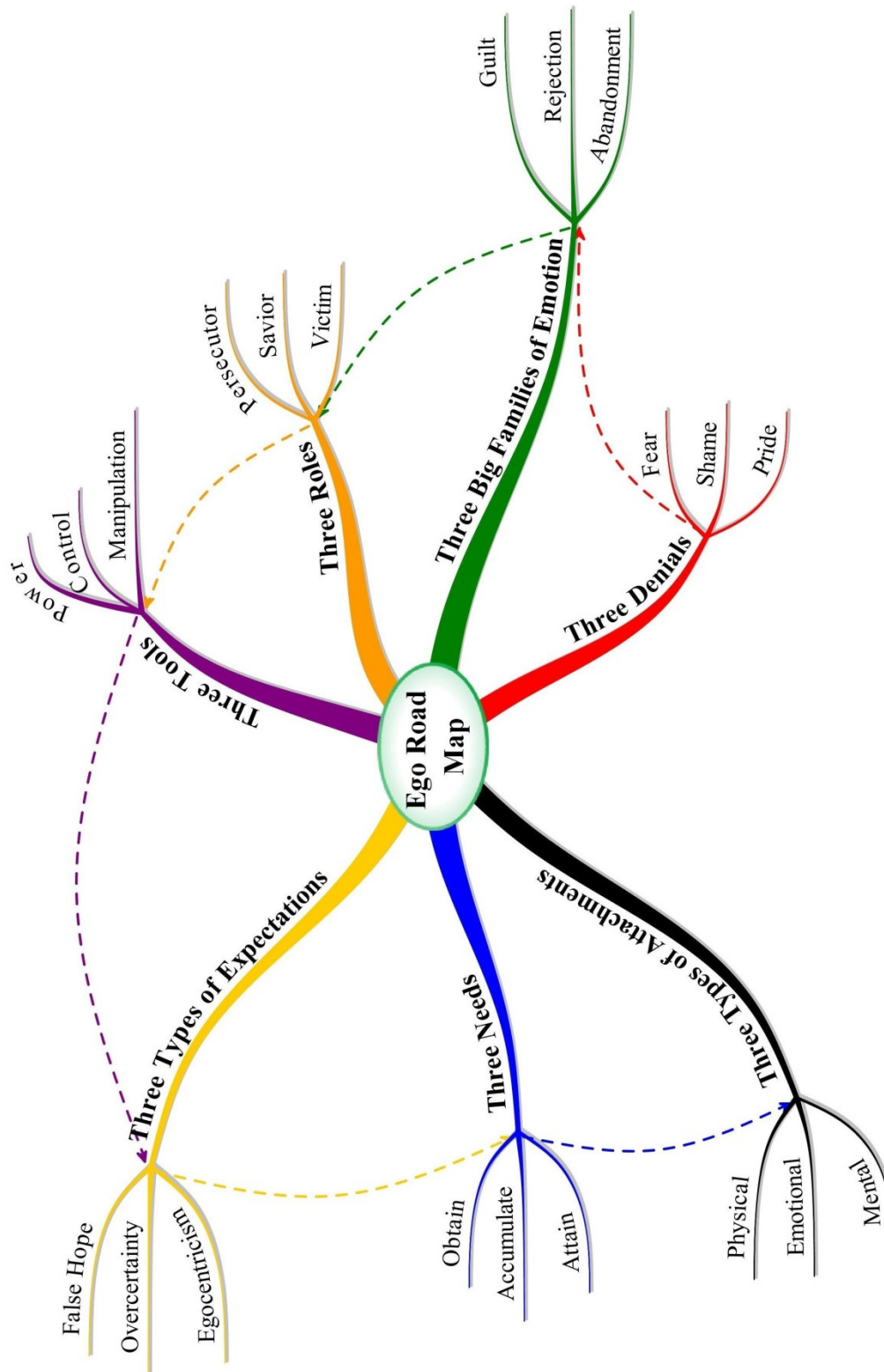
The Soul is God from a localized or individual point of view. But the Soul can perceive the infinity of the void, in which there is contentment in stillness, with no mind and no need.

The Ego is also God. It is our awareness of and reaction to separation. Through Ego we experience the illusion of not being loved by God. This part of us that holds on tight to the belief in separation, causing joyful and painful emotions to rise up inside us as we look for love from the outside. If we can learn to observe and master these emotions, we learn that all is love. This is spiritual evolution. The Ego is a tool, a beautiful gift, the contrast that shows us the light of God.

The 21 Masks of the Ego guide us in observing our emotions and behaviors, identifying the forces of nature inside ourselves and understanding them outside of ourselves.

~ Never forget that as we observe, forgiveness is essential. ~

~ Understanding is a tool, but the objective is to feel. ~



## The Three Denials

Denial means to choose the perception of Ego rather than Soul. But as we evolve, our Ego becomes more powerful, and there is more and more conflict inside of us.

**Fear** is avoidance, because we don't want to suffer. We want to be with another person, but don't ask for a date because of fear of rejection. We don't try to get a job, because we fear no one will want to hire us (rejection), or that we won't be competent and will be fired (abandonment). We even don't pray, because we might hear no answer.

**Pride** is the most obvious and complicated of the denials. Pride is a lie—we pretend that we are in charge, that we don't suffer from emotions and we justify our mistakes. We use pride to protect our image—to others and to ourselves. Pride grows from a profound need for outside love. We say or do things to compete or get attention in some form. The mask of pride can be self-sustaining—we are proud of being proud, and might pretend to be humble to justify it. Not feeling important or not being right originates self-hatred.

**Shame** is feeling unlovable. Pride leads us to shame. When we try to show how good we are, and no one responds, we sink in shame. We isolate, not wanting to expose ourselves and receive negative or no attention. We feel very alone.

## The Three Emotions

The Soul experiences emotion, not as good or bad, but as pure experience. The Soul doesn't perceive the distinction, but the Ego sees the distinction and classifies it into many variations. These are the main categories.

**Abandonment** is when something went away and we feel alone. It can be a person, in the form of physical death or the end of a relationship. We can lose a job, a car or anything. Something could leave us, or we could leave it—it is all abandonment.

**Rejection** is when someone or something pushes us away, and that makes us feel unloved. Someone could call us an asshole or the IRS might conduct an audit. It could be us pushing something away. We can find ourselves to be unlovable and that is a form of rejection.

**Guilt** is not whether we did something wrong, it is whether or not others approve of what we did. If we did the right thing, but others judge us, then we feel guilty. A student could study hard for a test, and make a high score that skews the bell curve for other students (his friends)—they then blame the good student for their lower scores and he feels guilty. If we do something “wrong”, but others congratulate us, we don’t feel guilty. For example, a gang member commits a crime as part of his gang initiation, and everyone is happy about it.

Existential guilt is the guilt of being alive. We love God so much, but have separated ourselves. We project that God doesn’t love us.

### **The Three Roles**

The roles are behaviors we use in an attempt to alleviate our suffering from the emotions. They are the result of powers inside you that push you in several directions.

**The Persecutor** applies power to resolve the pain of abandonment or rejection. Usually a persecutor doesn’t actively try to hurt another, they are indifferent.

**The Savior** helps others in order to get something out of it, love in return. It could be attention; it could be just to feel worthy. Sometimes the savior wants the victim to remain a victim, so he can keep his savior role and the victim can continue to give him credit. The savior cannot accept freedom for others, to let them live their experiences and evolve.

**The Victim** complains and makes sure someone knows when he suffers in order to get attention from others and feel loved. Even in victim we can play the role of persecutor in our complaining, such as complaining about politicians. Sometimes the savior plays the victim, complaining he has so much to do for others.

buddhist tradition

### **The Three Tools**

We use tools to apply force while playing the roles. Tools can all be good and helpful. The problem comes when we can’t accept that another doesn’t love us the way we want, and we try to force them to act in a way that will prove their love to us. In this way, tools influence the free will of others.

**Power** is a single act of strong expression. We impose ourselves on others to take what we want, or to produce happiness. The problem is that we can become addicted to power, usually because of pride.

**Control** means applying continuous force in a systematized way. Control can be useful as it helps us to be aware and responsible. One usually uses control when power isn’t enough.

**Manipulation** is making another believe that they will gain a benefit by doing what we want (when power and control aren't enough, or when one wants to protect their role as a helpless victim). It is done in a hiding, sneaky, subtle way. Manipulation is expressed by being agile in action or argument, precise with small details and creative.

## The Three Expectations

The expectations are what we hope for as a result of our performance, or competition, or just hope. This is different from the virtue of hope, which is a universal feeling that everything will always be fine.

**False hope** is a feeling that everything will turn out as we hope, but localized on one event or experience.

**Over-certainty** is having no doubts, and thinking we have control of everything to turn out well, without being prudent or wise. It is not objective; it is careless and taking things for granted.

**Egocentrism** is thinking that all the importance of a situation is about you. It is a certainty that everything is about you and for you without caring about the welfare of others. It is greedy and not caring about the karmic influences of your actions. Thinking another is egocentric is your own egocentrism flowing from rejection and pride.

## The Three Needs

The needs can be very difficult to observe—they are the expressions of getting something for our self. So they can be very constructive in our lives unless they are addictive in nature, or going against the free will of another. If others are happy and their needs are filled, it is good to fill your needs and practice non-attachment.

**Obtaining** means acquiring something we need or want. It is most often related to a physical object, such as purchasing a pair of shoes.

**Accumulating** is obtaining more and more resources when you already have enough. It is driven by the feeling of dissatisfaction, rather than contentment.

**Attaining** means to reach an objective. It can be caused by or lead to self-infatuation.

## The Three Attachments

The attachments are types of things that when we lose them, we cause ourselves suffering. We even suffer when we have them, imagining the suffering when it will go away from us. It is wise to enjoy something when we have it, consciously and accepting that everything is impermanent.

**Physical** attachments are mostly related to possessions.

**Emotional** attachments are mostly related to relationships.

**Mental** attachments are mostly related to Identity, and are closely bound to pride.

All these experiences of the Ego are about being loved. The power of love drives us. We feel abandoned, rejected and guilty because we want to feel loved. We play the roles of persecutor, victim and savior using the force of power and control, and then manipulation, because we want to be loved. We have hopes of being loved, we fill our needs, and became attached to what we believe will make us feel loved. Then, we prevent ourselves from seeing all of this through fear, pride and shame.

Observe, and forgive.

