For people with ambitions, talents, drive and potential to fulfill, ego comes with the territory. The need to be *better* than, *more* than, *recognized* for, far past any utility---that is ego. It is the sense of superiority and certainty that exceeds the bounds of confidence and talents. **Ryan Holiday**, in his book **“Ego is the enemy”**,describes howthe notion of ourselves grows so inflated that it begins to distort the reality that surrounds us. When self-confidence becomes arrogance, assertiveness becomes obstinacy and self-assurance becomes reckless abandon. Ryan says that every person is present in one of the three stages in their lives. First stage is when people are **aspiring to something,** trying and endeavoring all the hardships to achieve something. The second stage is when someone has **achieved success** in his path. The third stage is that when, even by putting efforts meticulously, one is met with rejection—**failure.** Writer postulates that ego can be the biggest enemy irrespective of the stage, someone is at. All the dreams a person carry in his eyes, the hardships he endures, the temporary pillar of success someone is standing on, or the rejection he faces in life, ego could be hidden behind any of these; and if not faced properly, it can prove to be the worst adversary.

**ASPIRE**

It goes without saying that every person is desiring for success in their lives. To achieve this success and to fulfill their dreams, man endeavors all the sufferings that come in his way. To reach the top of mountain, a pathway is setup, plans are made, preparations are done and then the arduous journey begins. This excursion has vicious traps, precipitous slops, dark tunnels in the way, but the will to surpass all stands tall to all of them. To achieve any goal in life, it is most of all important to take the first step and take on the journey. The impeding factor that can obstruct the way is imagination. If time is spent, more on imagining the success, than on working hard to get it; the path becomes infinite and destination becomes unachievable. *Arrogance* and *self*-*absorption* inhibit growth. So does *fantasy* and *vision*. People, instead of continuing the journey and taking on the next step, become more busier in fathoming the image of success. Such a person is said to be a prisoner of his own thoughts. Imagining the success is not the real problem, but the by-product along with this fantasy is. Treating yourself with an imaginative result beats an echoing tinnitus of supremacy in the unconscious part of brain, which then reflects in the conscious thoughts of a person. Ego results in the form of early-pride in people which consequently endangers their success.

The counter strategy to cope with ego at the preliminary stages is to focus on working than on imagination. We should try to remain more silent about our thoughts. **Silence** is the respite of the confident and the strong. Mere gossip anticipates real talk, and to express what is still in thought weakens action by forestalling it. Another thing that Ryan writes is, “*don’t be passionate*”. Your passion may be the very thing holding you back from power or influence or accomplishment. So, don’t drive yourself by *passion*, but by *reason*.

**SUCCESS**

The success stage is where ego becomes rather invincible. With success comes the temptation to tell oneself a story, to round off the edges, to cut out your lucky breaks and add a certain mythology to it all. One becomes a superior Greek God to all what is inferior, in his thoughts. This is what happens when we start to think about what our rapid achievements say about us and begin to slacken the effort and standards that initially fueled them. Everything and everyone begin to look tiny and almost worthless, the only worth-enough thing becomes one’s own-self.

Success with ego often leads a person to **paranoia**. The glory of the successful superstructure, built with constant hard-working, demands protection from its creator. In its frenzy to protect itself, paranoia creates the persecution it seeks to avoid, making the owner a prisoner of its own delusions and chaos. This is not the freedom one envisioned when one dreamed about success.

To get out of this state of apprehension, we must start by *managing ourselves*. Prioritizing all the tasks or things to be achieved helps arranging them in the chronology of importance. We need to get out of our head and stop telling the implied *story of glory*. Become a student. Nobody knows everything, but everybody knows something so learning must goes on. Focus on the minutiae details about things and try to find happiness even in a grain of sand. Most successful people are people you’ve never heard of. They want it that way. It keeps them sober. It helps them do their jobs. As, temporal success can be achieved by any means but what’s difficult is to apply the right amount of pressure, at the right time, in the right way, for the right period of time, in the right car, going in the right direction.

**FAILURE**

A person can, not only succumb to ego at aspire and success stages, but failure could also push him towards vainglory. When we are fighting desperately to achieve something, we expect the outcome to be in our favor, as glorious as the hardships were. We want to face success at the end of the day as if we believe it was made for us. We are so used to seeing people giving us a standing-ovation and the resonating beats of hands clapping as success, that failure strikes us much as a clout to our faces. A person can fall ill to ego when he thinks that he deserved to be the successful one as he did all the hard work but someone else is getting paid with it. One who didn’t fight as much I did, who didn’t work as much as I did, and the one who didn’t wish for it as much as I did. A nefarious end to all this can be when a person gets conceited with vengeance and covetousness. Thus, ego can bring more catastrophic results for his already malfunctioned situation.

To keep up our despondent hopes alive and to keep ego at bay’s length, we need to change the definition of success. For us, success is when people praise us for our achievements, when we are dedicated as the sole-winner of a long race. But in fact, success is the ***peace of mind***, which is direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do your best, to become the best that you are capable of becoming. There are two types of time in our lives: **dead time**, when people are passive and waiting, and, **alive time**, when people are learning and acting and utilizing every second. Every moment of failure, every moment or situation that we did not choose or control, presents this choice: Alive time or Dead time. So, we just need to choose the alive time. Let things go out of your hands and let God choose the way for you.

Thinking or battling with ego for just once in our lives cannot protects us for the rest. Much like the way we cannot expect the floor to remain clean forever by sweeping it for just once, we can’t say that we will never fall a prey to our egotistic thoughts after just one combat. Even after confronting ego in our aspirations, overcoming it our success phase, and fighting with it after our failure, we need to remind ourselves that it can find its way back to us. Because every day for the rest of our lives we’ll find ourselves at one of the three phases: *aspiration*, *success*, *failure*. We will battle the ego in each of them, make mistakes in each of them. But we must sweep the floor every minute of every day. And then sweep again.

Linked In

**“To whatever you aspire; to whatever success you have achieved; to whatever failures and challenges you’ll face, ego is the enemy”**, says **Ryan Holiday** in his book, **‘**Ego is the Enemy**’**. Every day of our lives, we find ourselves at one of the *three* stages: **aspiration**, **success**, **failure.**

We can succumb to pride in our aspirations by thinking more about the achievements and living less in the present. We prefer to live in that passionate fiction than in reality. It robs us of the ability to think that we even need to act.

We can be a victim of ego when the glory of success blinds us to a nefarious extent. Everything around us telltales an apocryphal story about our achievements that makes us believe that neither could anyone else achieve it nor do they deserve it.

We can become vainglorious in our failures when we see ourselves as a supreme deity that rejection could never have attacked us. How can someone else taste success, when it was our luscious delight, and we endeavored more pains then any body else.

To fight against this inner instinct of pride and vainglory, we must stay *humble* in our *aspirations*; *gracious* in our *success*; and, *resilient* in our *failures.* As, some of the world’s most unbelievable accomplishments are undoubtedly a result of a desire to avoid facing the darkness of ego.

Link: <https://lnkd.in/dSbCt7ei>