

**The Worst Ego Trips**

**Done to**

**Santosha Ma**

**by Her Devotees**

**or**

**(The Everyday Life of an Ego)**

**August 2015**

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## **The Worst Ego Trips Done to Santosha Ma by Her Devotees**

### **An Introduction**

The following confessional stories are not for the faint of heart. For there is no heart in these ego trips or any ego trip. But there is a big, big heart in encouraging that these stories be told. It is the Heart of Santosha Ma. She not only endured our ego trips, but constantly showed us and broke down every intimate detail of our well planned, rehearsed-over-many-life-times ego trips. Why would She do this and endure the pain of our unloving separation? Because that is all a Pure Heart knows, the Truth and Infinite Love!

In these stories, Santosha Ma's devotees expose their ego trips as an act of honesty, vulnerability, freedom and courage. Acknowledging ego strategies is the first step in understanding that the source of all ego activities is the self-contraction of self-separation from God. Why did they write these stories? So they can understand the self-contraction, be accountable for their ego trips and then toss them aside. Santosha Ma has completed the teaching of ego transcendence and releasing the self-contraction. Through her instruction and love, we begin the hike up the mountain, one determined, joyous step at a time.

When ego trips rear their ugly head, things go south in a hurry, they fester and churn inside your decoder ring of a mind. You are demanding all the attention. Playing sexual games to hunt down, capture and destroy any heart that gets in your way, including your own. And believe or not, even claiming to be the most spiritual. Getting high on not only being an apostle, but being the best and most favorite of the Master's. The ego does not love, it only seeks experiences and then settles for carnival trinkets, thinking all the while it is getting fulfilled through experience.

You know your familiar patterns and reactions intimately, you have practiced them over and over and over again until you forget the end result: no heart—no love—just panic-inspired suffering. Just you and Narcissus, sitting by the edge of the pond, glorifying your images until you dissolve and vanish. You and Narcissus, sharing the last ego tantrum in your lifetimes. Having the mind-jerking tug-of-war of all times. Even your self-contraction is held up in great regard. To the end! A badge of honor!

As these stories unfold, even though the individual story plots are different, common themes bleed through. A favorite strategy of all egos is the special one. Never outgrown from the childish request to look at me. Look at Me! Be it as the special artist, musician, mother, lover, social worker or park ranger, it all connects to the separate one solidifying itself through self-proclaimed glorious recognition. You might want to consider who you are asking this recognition from? Another separate one? Isn't it crazy receiving illusionary flattery of co-workers or other egos. Other common ego trips explored include emotional/sexual games, the poor-me victim, entitlement, and roles related to family such as wife and mother. As a bonus for all those special egos, we included all the attached negative traits such as jealousy, arrogance, possessiveness, obsessions, anger, revenge, conceit, power struggles, manipulations and relational sabotage. Santosha Ma has worked through with all her devotees the trappings of each and every ego trip and has made insightful recommendations, only to be argued against by the ego and the ego defending itself as the separate self.

The gem of these stories is to realize that all activities, with the exception of being in relationship and service to God, are just different flavors of ego trips and the self-contraction. Recognizing the patterns and releasing the contraction is the sadhana of ego transcendence. And remembering, and being reminded that the illusion of separation from God, is just that, an illusion!

To Santosha Ma's recognition, her teachings have taken hold, we are beginning seeing and feeling the benefits of loosening our grips on the illusion of a separate self by examining our ego trips. Read and explore these stories with an open heart, discovering and then banishing your own ego trips along the way. This is the traditional tale of using a thorn to remove a thorn. Take these stories as healing thorns and what they represent, an inquiry into the universal ego so you can realize your true yearning and condition as the universal heart. This is Santosha Ma's gift to all human kind! Hallelujah!

## 1) I am the Special Artist

### Ego # 1

I have always felt and identified with being an artist. Even as a child, my preschool teacher thought I was very talented and gave me praise for my first drawing of a rose. However, my mother thought the teacher had helped me with the drawing, This made me mad. At school, instead of studying, I was always drawing or doodling in my notebook. Being an artist was one of my biggest conceited ego trips with Santosha Ma, but it felt very real to me.

One of the first times I met Santosha Ma, I was at a local art show, exhibiting my drawings and also doing quick portrait sketches. I wanted to earn my own money, but it was also good practice. My style of art was whimsical, many drawings were of a fantasy world and cartoonish. The bottom line was I did not have the skills to go beyond this rudimentary level. I was still very much a beginner, but I wouldn't admit it!

I could tell from the beginning that Santosha Ma was an artist by the way She dressed and how She looked at and commented about my pictures. She said she liked my pictures; this made me very happy. She was very kind!

Santosha Ma encouraged me to develop a deeper relationship to art and to draw to the light. I didn't understand what She meant. As I said, I was very conceited about my artwork and I was also not open to what Santosha Ma was offering at the time. I also felt that my art was very private and nobody should mess with my art. My art was my gift to share with the world.

Santosha Ma gave me many art assignments that I loved doing. However, I felt offended when She gave me advice on how to increase my art skills. I felt the advice would damage my style. I had a very stubborn relationship with my artwork that made it impossible to take any criticism, even from my Guru. I could not even admit that my proportions of human bodies were off and the perspectives of objects were also not right. What could Santosha Ma teach me if I thought I was already a master artist? The illusion of the separate self sense never yields to the truth, because of this refusal, I lost a great opportunity for my art to grow.

When it comes to spiritual art, it is completely different than conventional ego art. The process that Santosha Ma is talking about is to use art as a medium to express Her true nature as the Divine, versus an ego seeking recognition and fulfillment from the world.

I was so blind, and far away from being a real artist, especially not a transcendental artist. My biggest disappointment I discovered was that I didn't love art enough to endure the process that Santosha Ma was offering.

Santosha Ma was always sharing her artwork and art projects with me and we did art projects together. But I was still jealous and competitive with Her since the beginning. She decided not to include me with Her art projects for a while. I was devastated, I kept on announcing what a big loss I suffered. Again, just about the ego, being the victim! I began to realize I have a complicated and disappointing relationship with artwork.

Santosha Ma still teaches me about artwork. She teaches me what it is like to be a real artist

through Her own demonstration as an artist. Over the years I have seen what it takes to be an artist, only a conventional artist of course.

Santosha Ma's approach to art is that Her Divine Transcendental art is given to the world as a vehicle for Divine Transmission. It is very natural for Her to express Her true nature through art, because of Her Divine Love and Passion. She has transcended the ego, She has realized Herself as the Divine. Art is a Sacred Form of relationship with the Divine. Relationship with the Guru is the first and best way to eradicate the ego.

Over the years, Santosha Ma has graced me with the service of framing Her art work. I love matching the matting and frames with each piece of art, I get very contemplative when I see Her images, collages and nature work. Santosha Ma is a master at creating a specific lifestyle and ego transcending service for all Her devotees that specifically serves there enlightenment. I am so grateful for Santosha Ma, the master artist and Guru!

## 2) Rebound Marriage – Again

### Ego # 1

Whenever I think of stupid ego trips, trying to get back together with the man I married and divorced twice before would rank high. They were not happy marriages, there were many reasons: as a husband he had cheated on me, he was bad with money, I didn't like having sex with him because he slept with other women. I thought he was very needy and he wanted my attention a lot. When we went to parties, I didn't like the social norm that I should sit with him, I would rather spend time with myself than go to parties or other social occasions. These are my reasons. I also know I was not being a loving wife, I just didn't like being married!

Santosha Ma worked with us for a long time during, between and after the marriages. During the marriages, Santosha Ma gave us different practices and disciplines for each other so we could become sadhana buddies and the love between us would naturally grow. But because I didn't practice what Santosha Ma suggested, I became an angry and mean person. It was a very difficult time for me, I didn't want to face the dark side of myself. I was disappointed that I did not love and didn't try for love. I felt stone cold. So in the end, we ended the marriages.

Time passed, but the wound never healed. I moved on! This mistake was hard for my ego to take and recover. Santosha Ma says that everything the ego does is a mistake.

Nonetheless, after a few years I created a fantasy of wanting to be with my former husband again. This time I promised to myself that I would love him for real. This is how the rebound courtship began. One day at a Japanese restaurant, Santosha Ma and I were having lunch, I hesitated to bring up the subject, but I did. I asked Santosha Ma's permission to be with my former husband again. I still remember her expression of disappointment. She said it would never workout. I expressed that I still wanted to try it anyway. Lunch was over.

I thought my former husband wanted to get back together, but I couldn't force him to go along with my plan. He was agreeable and we ended up moving in together. It felt strange, but we were determined to work it out. I knew Santosha Ma was not happy about my choice. I felt like an outcast and sad. My former husband and I, the rebound couple, tried to love each other and forgive each other for past mistakes, but it was obvious we were not happy. We were doing something against our guru's wishes. I pulled my former husband into this mess while he was vulnerable with his own crisis. He needed to figure out how to get back in relationship with Santosha Ma. I also saw his exposed weaknesses again, yet, I saw how he loves Santosha Ma. Neither of us could help each other, we could only offer each other pity and consolation.

About a month into our reunion, during our Thanksgiving Day celebration, Santosha Ma asked my former husband about his behavior at work concerning woman. His answer was not good. Everybody was looking at me in surprise and pity. His promiscuous thought patterns had not changed. He didn't even consider the fact that we were back together again to change our old patterns. I pondered why I wanted to be with him again when the relationship was not working out. I was just fixed on seeking to be fulfilled by him and I couldn't see why my love was not enough to change him. That same night, I told my former husband that I was moving out. It was a very sad evening for both of us. We both had a lot of growing up and inquiring to do around our emotional/sexual patterns.

Santosha Ma kept telling me that I was seeking a man to take care of me financially. She also said that I wanted a house. This is the female programming, I expected a man to provide me with money and a house. I held onto my former husband because I wouldn't let go of my desire, this was not love. Once I understood this, I was able to let go of my former husband and the fantasy of marriage ended.



### 3) The Santosha me Gallery

Ego # 1

This story is about my ego trip of using Santosha Ma's artwork to make me look good. I had always wanted to have an art gallery for Santosha Ma's art work. She has created so many beautiful art pieces, ranging from photographs, collages and tile pieces. I wanted the artwork to be seen and have it displayed with the highest regard. It was my dream and mission to have the gallery.

When I was looking for a new place to live, I found a place that was very suitable for a gallery and also as a living space. It had a large room with a separate entrance away from the living space. I mentioned to Santosha Ma about my plans, She thought it was a good idea and accepted my plan.

I was very happy. I negotiated with the owner to fix up the large room as a gallery. I offered my willingness to collaborate with him to renovate the large room, I offered to help him and pay for the renovation. He accepted my offer and told me he would help me with the project; he built shelves, a closet and installed extra lighting.

With the help of another devotee with labor and funding, it took about six months to complete the project; the gallery had manifested itself beautifully. It was exciting getting the gallery completed for Santosha Ma. This had been a goal (fantasy) all my life. The day when we hung the last art piece on the wall, my friend who was helping me, yelled from outside and said there was this beautiful double rainbow stretching across the sky. I was overjoyed with the completion of the gallery and by Santosha Ma's Divine Grace. I thought it was a good day and a good omen. When I had the gallery, I felt like I had done something great for Santosha Ma.

After the gallery was completed, Santosha Ma offered Her Devotees a meditation every Friday evening. Her devotees also conducted a Puja to Her on Saturday evening. The gallery lasted for 2 years until Santosha Ma closed it down because of my illusion and manipulation to create a spiritual ashram on my landlord's property.

Looking back, I did not make a clear arrangement with the owner in the beginning. I was really hyping up the landlord to Santosha Ma on how generous he was and how he was a very kind man, while at the same time I was manipulating him to get what I wanted. I thought I was ahead of the game. Everything seemed to be running smoothly for a while until I began seeking a bigger fantasy. I got greedy, I wanted to make a spiritual sanctuary, an ashram on the property, with his help.

I totally overestimated the owner's wish to participate in my ego trip. The landlord had his own plans for his own property, which interfered with my idea of creating a sacred place. I was mad at him for not cooperating, but I was afraid I would lose the gallery. It didn't matter, Santosha shut my ego trip down along with the gallery. Santosha Ma told me that She doesn't need an Ashram, the whole town is an Ashram because She lives here.

I used Santosha Ma to build my own fantasy and offered it back to Her as a gift. My ego showed I was a big manipulator and liar. I felt I had achieved something in my life, I thought I was doing a form of spiritual practice, as long as My Guru was happy. Now I know it wasn't true.

#### **4) My Ego Trip, on a Trip With My Guru**

##### **Ego # 1**

Santosha Ma gave me an opportunity to go on a trip with Her to South Lake Tahoe. I felt very lucky and special to be in Her Company. But I was also nervous and excited at the same time. Being with Her is very intense and requires me to stay conscious. I prayed the night before that I would do good service for Her work.

As soon as Santosha Ma left Her driveway, She began teaching me about ego tendencies and how I could do ego transcending sadhana (practice). She went over many considerations, including how to stay impersonal with experiences, and how to recognize and release the self-contraction. She was continuously teaching and I was sitting next to Her, wanting to take in everything.

I was watching the road and scenery go by, but later Santosha Ma told me that how much I participate in the experience is based on how much I am in the moment and paying attention. I wanted to be in every moment and wanted to notice everything. She explained which route She was taking along with the route we were going to take on the way home. She was serving me and I was being attentive, listening, without fogging out and missing the point.

Santosha Ma had made reservations for a hotel, it was both economical and artistic, I was happy I could pay for the hotel. The hotel was located within walking distance from a shopping mall. She made all the arrangements on what to do, where to eat and so on. I was just being with Her and making sure I didn't go unconscious.

The next day I left my purse in the hotel room and took my wallet and my backpack, without my reading glasses. I wanted to look good, but was not being practical. Santosha Ma told me to never leave a purse in a hotel room or go without my glasses.

After breakfast, Santosha Ma drove to the trail head for a hike down to the beach, a 9.2 mile hike. When I heard 9.2 miles I got nervous because I had not been hiking in a long time, but I wanted to show Her I could do the hike.

It was rough starting because my body was still adjusting to the high elevation. Santosha Ma gave me encouragement by saying it will get better, and it did! But by the time we got to the beach I was already worried about how I was going to make it back to the trail head. Santosha Ma took some pictures and we had lunch that we brought. We also rested for a while. She told me later that She read my mind about wondering how I was going to get back. She was doing Her nature work and I didn't want to interfere with Her. She was taking care of me and doing all Her nature work as well. It is a mystery how She does it all.

Going back up the mountain trail was hard and got harder because I was too much in my wimpy mind. Santosha Ma stopped and gave me a teaching about not paying attention to the mind and not letting myself slow down. Don't settle for a low limit. Besides, I had to get back to the trail head. What other choice did I have? But I was having a hard time going up the trail, I couldn't catch my breath, my legs were cramping and I was overheated. I thought if I had a hit of caffeine it would help—or going up the trail slower would also help. I hated uphill, but I didn't want Santosha Ma to notice how hard a time I was having. She told me to take off my jacket because I was overheating. At this point, I was not capable of serving anyone, not even myself. Santosha

Ma kept on hiking up the trail. I barely made one step at a time. We finally came to a flat section. When I saw the parking lot I was a very happy. Thank God I made it! Not really, Santosha Ma carried me without letting me slow down.

I looked disgustingly tired, but with Santosha Ma's help, my energy was good. When we came back to the Hotel room, I meditated and felt energized. Santosha Ma imitated how I looked on the trail and laughed and made me laugh too!

I like how Santosha Ma asks me simple questions, such as "Are you hungry?" "Do you want to see a movie?" Very straight forward. I always say yes to these questions. And that is what we did in the evening. I like to talk with Santosha Ma about the movie because She has excellent insight and Her seeing is so clear. She is better than any movie director in the world.

On trips like these, when we wake up, Santosha Ma usually talks about the dreams She had during the night. I don't usually remember my dreams. I listen to Her talk about Her dreams and say something I think goes along with the dream. I like it when She talks about other devotees' issues besides my own. Yet, She is also talking of the world ego in general and I am seeing how strange and stressful the world of egos are living. I feel separate from them and I believe I am not like them. All I know is that Santosha Ma is always working with everyone and everything. She is super conscious and notices everything, always giving Darshan. She is very intense from the first thing in the morning till the last thing at night and actually throughout the night in the dream world. I don't know how She works through dreams, but I know She never stops working. (When She explains Her dreams with actors and musicians, world leaders and others seekers of spiritual truths, She teaches them the exact same way as She teaches Her local circle of devotees—with humor, clarity, understanding and firmness).

The second day hike would be easier. Santosha Ma announced in the morning She was going to check out a few places around the Lake, but no long hikes. I thought it was because I didn't do well the first day and She was making it easy for me, or I felt better energy because I had a cup of tea in the morning. Anyway, I was ready for a long hike! I wanted to prove to Her that I can hike. The difference Between Santosha Ma and myself and all egos is She is about the work of relating with everything, and I and all egos are all about themselves and how they are doing, barely noticing anything else.

The second day hikes were beautiful and the energy was good. Santosha Ma drove to the north end of Lake Tahoe and walked along the lake's shoreline. She told me that Lake Tahoe wanted to be a part of Her nature work. Her work was done for this part of the trip.

At dinner that night, She started talking about Her "Art Book Project." She said the Table of Contents is all over the place and She couldn't tell what the book was about. She guided me to stay simple and keep the focus on the fact that the book is about Her artwork. I was so excited that we are going to talk about the truth that Santosha Ma's artwork is healing the world. I expressed to Her my passion to write about Her artwork.

I couldn't take a turn driving because I did not pick up my prescription glasses before the trip. She drove home another way. The scenery was beautiful. Santosha Ma went through the teaching again and told me that it was OK for Her to teach while she was driving because there was nothing else to do while driving home. The times when She was quiet in the car the energy was still

intense. I was fighting not to fall asleep. I was silently feeling and summarizing what had happened on this trip and it amazed me again who Santosha Ma really was, the Truth!

The trip to Lake Tahoe was about Her passion for Her work and Her love. But when I write about my experiences on the trip, besides witnessing Her work, it was about me being an ego-self and trying to stay conscious in Her company. I know one thing, and it is that I love Santosha Ma so much, and my gratitude is beyond words.

## 5) Social Relationships at Work - The Wrong Recipe

### Ego# 1

This is a story about my ego trips at work. For many years, Santosha Ma has been pointing out how I assert and misuse power at work. I like my job because I believe I can do it well, but how well is a different matter altogether. Santosha Ma's teaching about a job is to focus attention on the task at hand and not get personal or social with other co-workers. Do the best you can every day as a worker but also as a devotee at work.

I became a kitchen supervisor 15 years ago. What I found out right away was that there is a lot of drama created in the kitchen. I guess any workplace is the same. On the first day of my job, my supervisor told me that it was his last day working in the kitchen. He was changing jobs to be the grounds supervisor at the same place.

I wanted to be a supervisor and thought I could handle the job. I wanted to be able to tell others what to do, and do it my way. I thought I could be a little kinder and friendlier to my staff and it would all work out. I had no experience being a supervisor anywhere, I only had the conceit that I could easily do the job and the desire to succeed. I became a lousy boss and had to work hard with Santosha Ma's help to learn how to be a better boss.

One of the problems is I separated doing spiritual practice at work and at home. I often took my work home with me and struggled with a busy mind. Work was draining my energy. Santosha Ma told me to take the day as a whole and to do practice at work and at home.

Another mistake I made was creating a draining bond with my workers. I talked personally with them and tried to solve their personal life problems. I acted as if I was their life coach. Another devotee who also worked at the kitchen said he saw me flirting with the male employees. I denied this. I was also talking personally with him, giving him advice about his life. These conversations had nothing to do with work and I was playing a personal power game with him at work.

People tended to be chatty if they had nothing to do. When it is busy, everyone is more focused on the task at hand. I also see I do the same bonding type pattern. I also socialize and check in with my staff when it is slow. It is like going around marking your territory. Which is definitely a no-no in a kitchen, considering our encompassing health codes.

Santosha Ma pointed out that most conversations are negative, complaining, gossiping and backbiting others. I noticed I was doing these exact patterns. I was also getting involved in the dramas that had nothing to do with me, plus I was contributing to the dramas. I didn't think it was any harm being social with others at work. But it was actually taking up my time, attention and energy that should have been directed towards my Enlightenment. As Santosha Ma has said, it is always better to only talk business at work. Remember, loose lips sink ships.

I also played out an ego trip with my boss. I would always argue with him because I didn't agree with the way he wanted the kitchen tasks completed. He was my boss, but I did not follow his instructions. I was angry with him and talked behind his back with the kitchen staff. This was some serious backbiting. I was blaming and pointing a finger at him, but it was me who had to

follow his instructions and do my job right. I was deep into a power struggle with him that almost cost me my job.

Santosha Ma stopped me from these ego-tripping strategies and saved me from getting fired. Santosha Ma worked with me in seeing the areas of my job that needed to be corrected and handled in a professional manner. I also had to remember that I was a devotee more interested in Enlightenment than participating in seeking power through low-level dramas. I did not want to be in a situation that I could lose my job, so I decided to stick to the task at hand and not socialize. Santosha Ma was teaching me that to move towards Enlightenment, I had to understand the ego mechanism and what I was seeking at work and then do counter-egoic practices at work that would free up my attention for God.

When I tell Santosha Ma that my mind is full of work and I have a hard time giving attention to Her, She reminds me that I cannot get personal with people at work—I have to break the pattern. I must only talk about the job and task at hand, no social chit-chat and make sure I eat lunch alone. She said if I do this, I will have peace of mind. She also said that if I don't follow her instructions it is because I don't want to stop the ego trips at work and I don't care about Enlightenment. I can't serve two masters at once.

## 6) Emotional/Sexual – The Worst of it All

Ego # 2

My worst treatment of my Guru happened because of my seeking in the emotional/sexual.

I had an intimate partner when I came to Santosha Ma. I told Santosha Ma that I really wanted to do spiritual practice and wake up. She embraced me as an intimate friend, as She did with all Her devotees. After a while, Santosha Ma asked me if I would let go of this relationship with him, and serve Her closely in Her work. I initially said yes, but the next morning I told Her I changed my mind and blamed it on the guy being unwilling or unable to do it—which was not true. I refused Santosha Ma because of my own seeking to be fulfilled by a man, to fill that programmed belief in me that I had to be with a man or life wasn't right— and I wanted to have sex. That was what was driving me, not my love and attraction for the Divine, which I saw alive in Santosha Ma.

The worst event I created was after a gathering Santosha Ma had with Her devotees and some other people who had come to see Her. The consideration of an “open Marriage” was on the table for those of us who were together in “couples” and I was afraid of what might happen. At the party, my partner made the announcement that a piece of paper, the marriage contract, meant nothing! I saw him dancing with other women and being approached. I got quite angry about it internally, but kept partying anyway, feeling hysterical inside. In that state of anger and fear, I decided, to flirt with another married man at the party. I gave signals that he recognized, and I worked to turn him on. After the party, the house was full, so we shared sleeping places, and I had us share with this man and his wife. Soon it was suggested, certainly by my internal pressing, that we swap partners, and we did. It was an orgy and we had sex in front of each other, with ours lasting much longer than necessary, and full of exclamations of pleasure. A gross display.

This all happened after Santosha Ma had given a moving talk about Her life and Work, a vulnerable expression of Her need for our love and for us to do practice. I was oblivious to Her response. I was having revenge on my partner. I knew I was hysterical, and was out of line completely. The act of revenge drove me, I know clearly now. I do not deny my actions or share the blame with anybody else.

Santosha Ma recently gave me an instruction about “cooperative blame”. The instruction explained to me that if I took 100% blame and responsibility for all my actions, and what occurs in my life, then I can move on and grow out of the ego pattern. If I assign “cooperative blame” I am bound to that situation and karma. This was a Graceful Gift to receive, as I found myself last week assigning “cooperative blame” for events 20 years later! I am done with cooperative blame now and take is as my own action. It is a relief to have this burden lifted.

There was a another “worst” round with my friend's husband, this time after they had separated and she had said she did not love him like that anymore. I came on to him again with caring words. He felt my intent, I know! Shortly after that we were on a retreat with Santosha Ma in the Eastern Sierras. We ended up sharing a room together since the house was small. Again I came onto him with kind words. He responded by pumping me with sexual energy in return. In the morning I told Santosha Ma that he had so much sexual energy that I felt we should hook up. I was blaming him completely, not even cooperatively. But I was the one who brought up the idea, and I was the one who started the play. We ended up having sex on the retreat. My attention was on him and

not Santosha Ma, where it should have been. She suffered this abuse again from me, so directly in Her company, in the same house. The man and I had sex for a couple weeks after returning home from the retreat. We were not in love, and I was not being loving. But I was trying to control the situation to get some sexual pleasure, and I felt he enjoyed it until I began to get so controlling.

I went on an overnight trip with Santosha Ma. She asked me if I would let go of the relationship with him. I said yes, but then I changed my mind on the ride home. I told Her no again, the same response I gave Her when I first met Her. Nothing had changed with my patterns. The relationship ended with his choice to stay true to Santosha Ma by ending our relationship. I was in agreement at first. However, a couple of days later I felt the option arise to get upset about how the end unfolded. It came up very clearly— a unique moment that I remember like it happened yesterday. I chose then to get upset. I got very angry and felt betrayed by everybody and ego embarrassed, and was in a terrible mood with everyone in my household for about 3 weeks. Finally the contraction broke with the help of Santosha Ma's graceful instructions and with my roommates' interventions.

It has taken years for me to see what I choose, to admit it as my own action and not blame someone else, and see the lower nature of the ego and its dark patterns. All dark stuff. There is no good ego pattern. It's all dark and selfish. The ego is willing to betray anybody for any illusionary seeking goal. These events are gems, because I will not forget them and I know where these decisions will lead. Santosha Ma calls these events gems because when we see a choice in front of us, these gems shine with our memories, showing us the outcome before we even move toward the action. We can stop the seeking right then!

Santosha Ma never withdraws Her Love. This is the real miracle of these times. She endured my worst patterns and always loved me and served me to understand the ego trips I was playing out. That is the True Guru Working with egoity so the ego can be transcended. And it is slow! It is a slow and painful process for Santosha Ma, who IS the speed of light. I am so grateful to be in her Company. Thank You for doing this Work, Beloved Santosha Ma.



## 7) Within the Eye of Ego Embarrassment

### Ego # 2

Recently Santosha Ma used the phrase “ego embarrassment” to describe what motivates my worst ego trips. I saw my ego trips played out in dramas of un-love, cruelty and revenge. All centered around my ego being embarrassed in front of other devotees when I was corrected by Santosha Ma. When I engage ego embarrassment, I am not receiving the instructions She is giving. I reject Her gift with anger, feeling humiliated because the special me looked bad. Santosha Ma has shown me, and I clearly see it now, that ego embarrassment quickly goes from anger to conniving revenge, and sadly, the revenge is directed at Santosha Ma.

It all started like this. Santosha Ma had given us an assignment to watch and write a short report on Adi Da’s YouTube video entitled “We Are Not Separate Beings.” She asked us to bring the reports to the next Friday night meditation. I did the report, but forgot to bring it to meditation. After the meditation, I told Santosha Ma I left it at home and asked if I could run home and get it. When I returned, people were taking turns reading their reports. Santosha Ma asked me to read my report next.

I was already upset when I started reading my report. As I read, I started adding words willy nilly, which made it sound choppy and awkward. I got more nervous and upset, Santosha Ma said the presentation was chaotic and I should stop reading and sit down. She said quietly “So Immature.” I answered “I agree.” I did agree in that moment. I also got “ego embarrassed” in front of everybody which started the dreaded reaction chain described above. On the way home, my housemates were saying how lovely the readings were. I was not speaking, I did not agree, I was mad, but not conscious of the level of anger I was animating.

At home that night I started having negative thoughts about the event. I heard the thoughts “She should not have stopped me, She could have let me finish.” I knew these thoughts were negative, I felt upset about them, and upset about feeling embarrassed. I stayed in this anger and did not release the anger, even knowing it was destructive. What I did the following morning was shocking.

I was waiting for Santosha Ma to call me over for breakfast and service like She had been doing on Saturday mornings. To make things quicker, She would let the phone ring once and hangup. I thought I heard the phone, but I convinced myself I did not hear the call when actually Santosha Ma did call that morning. I thought She might have been angry with me from the mistake of not remembering my assignment the night before. I kept the negative spin going.

She called me later and had to yell at me to get me to understand and admit what I had done. Which was to purposely ignore Her phone call to punish Her (revenge) for my ego embarrassment the night before. I was blaming Santosha Ma for my mistake, for my immaturity, for everything. It took me a little while, but I finally admitted my mistake. She showed me the ego mechanisms of the mistake and helped me understand and face the consequences of “ego embarrassment,” which is anger, leading into revenge.

Ego embarrassment is not caring or loving, it is not even sane. It is a dark ego trip. I always wanted to be admired for my spiritual understanding, on top of the heap, to be superior to others, especially the women devotees. Ego embarrassment is also destructive, negative, selfish, and

cruel. Santosha Ma told me that I was enacting this revenge, (totally not caused by Her) on the one person who worked tirelessly in showing me the truth and who serves my life continuously to learn to Love. That is all She is ever doing!

To shortcut the inevitable results of the ego pattern of ego embarrassment, I rely on my understanding to know what it is. When Santosha is correcting my ego pattern, I trust her motive, it is not to embarrass me, it is to set me free. It takes fire to burn the ego away.

## 8) Jealousy with a Side of Special Me

### Ego # 2

I always wanted to be admired for my spiritual understanding, the special one, to be superior to others, especially the women devotees. I also wanted the status as being the closest to Santosha Ma, Her best friend. I wanted to possess Her attention and love, just for me. Why? Because I deserved it all. This false entitlement created jealousy when I thought someone was getting more attention or I was not the most superior. She had told me endless times about my special me, superior ego pattern. It is a betrayal of Her Love and teaching to continue this ego pattern.

One example of this jealousy came up because Her daughter and family came to live with Her. I was very happy they were coming, knowing their love for Her and knowing Her Love for them. She was told by Adi Da that their being here would help Her stay in the body, their love would help hold Her here.

They came in October and by November I was confessing to Santosha Ma in front of everyone that I was jealous of Her family. I hoped my confession would release the jealousy. It did temporary, but not completely.

On Santosha Ma's enlightenment day celebration, I wanted to play two songs for Her, but it did not happen, not for any particular reason, it just didn't happen. I was upset, I called another devotee and blamed him, an innocent bystander caught between the cross fire of my misplaced blame and jealousy. He felt I was nuts. Santosha Ma told me later that it was because my performer's ego did not get its moment in the sun. I also wanted to perform the songs to redeem myself. Do something good in front of Santosha Ma in the spotlight so the other devotees would look up to me again.

The next incident happened when Santosha Ma's daughter organized a Fashion Show which was a gift to Her Guru. I was asked to bring an endive salad, but completely forgot. I felt shocked I did not remember at all. Santosha Ma said I sabotaged Her work and gift by forgetting a simple salad, and that jealousy will manifest in acts if it is not conscious and released.

Keeping the forgetting theme going, two months later, I forgot Her son's birthday party. It was the same day that myself and two other women devotees moved into a house together. I justified forgetting the party by blaming it on the move. The night before, I clearly remembered us discussing the birthday plans, I only remembered the party when I was almost up to the house for evening meditation and realized that I forgot the party. It was too awful to be unintentional. I turned around and drove home thinking how familiar this sabotage was to the endive salad incident. I was choosing my jealousy instead of Santosha Ma's grace-filled company and attention, which I received at celebrations and every single day at mediation. The mistakes continued, Santosha Ma said that my jealousy did affect Her family's relationship to Her. I was shocked because I thought it only made me look like a jerk. Santosha also told me "I don't want to be the object of your jealousy....You have to start dealing with your jealousy."

Another incident centered on Santosha Ma helping me clear out my attachment to my mother. She asked me to write a report. I wrote the report in a way that made Santosha Ma sound very harsh. She sent it back to write it again. It took me several drafts to finally portray the instructions

truthfully without the report sounding angry. Santosha Ma said She had only been working to free me from my attachment with my mother, but I got angry and punished Her unfairly.

After I moved into a house with two other women devotees, I fancied myself the superior one, the most spiritual one and the house dictator—my usual pattern of special me. I was very unkind and bossy to my housemates until it was brought to the surface and disciplined by Santosha Ma. I didn't even see it myself. One of the other women mentioned it to Santosha Ma and She instructed me again on my special me ego pattern.

Confrontation, Difficulty and Demand. That is what is involved in transcending the ego. This is what She told me that Adi Da said to His circle of devotees. This is what She is giving to me and I am very grateful. Within a day or two I could see how all the mistakes I have been doing were connected to the special-me pattern. I saw that I just wanted to be the special one again and I put that label on Her family when that is not their relationship with Her at all. So if I could not be the special one, I would get angry, sabotage events and get revenge. That is the ego in action, the fake separate one trying to force its separation. It is all a lie, All of it! I called Santosha Ma and told Her because it felt so clear to me. She said it was good to hear me say it.

I feel all these events are related, all the same act, a huge tantrum of ego patterns that hurt everyone and Santosha Ma. My ego patterns of wanting to be the special one caused all these consequences. All of my own doing. The ego is insane, why identify the ego as who you are?

Through all of this, Santosha Ma only loved and served me, each time correcting me and helping me to be restored to loving Her and right action. That is all She is ever doing with any of Her devotees, no matter what mistakes we are making. She always bringing harmony to the relationships within Her circle of devotees. She is Divine Love, Forgiveness and Help. Forever and for all!

I still hear thoughts coming up of these patterns, Thank God I am just hearing them and letting them slide away on my Guru's grace, instead of hooking into the next uglier thought with its attached lame emotions and reactions. She always says "The ego is what you are doing, until you are not doing it." She has shown me that the door is always open to do the work of ego transcendence with Her, if we are truly interested in Enlightenment, free from identifying with the thoughts, desires and emotions we are attaching to and doing to create these endless messes of un-love. You act as the ego until there is no ego left.

She has asked us to write these stories of our worst ego trips with Her to show Her we are on Her side, not the ego side. That our lives are about Her and Enlightenment. Our conviction to do ego-transcending work will be the focus of our lives, not seeking ego fulfillment. I know all will someday see the sacrifice the Guru makes in being here. She puts Herself in a dangerous position by being vulnerable to the egos who believe they are the separate self. Santosha Ma lives the Truth and feels our abuse from all our ego trips without ever withdrawing Her Love or Guidance. This is Her Profound Gift, Her living proof that God is real, And She is That and God can be realized. We are lost without the Guru's Sign as the Divine Truth.

## 9) On the Prowl - Will it Ever End

### Ego # 2

Santosha Ma was living in a very large house with about 13 of Her devotees in Novato, CA. I was single and still on the sexy prowling of seeking. A young male devotee lived there and was also on the prowling. One day he asked me outright if I would have sex with him. I did not say no! I did not answer right away, I must have said I'll think about it. He'd had a longish affair with a woman about my age years before. Now he was asking me.

On a walk that night, I told Santosha Ma what the young devotee asked me. She said, "Did you hit him?" No. "Did you say 'no!'" No! I think She said oh brother or something like that, but it was not enough to stop the seeking train that already left the station. I fed the fantasy all day with the possibility of pleasure at night. I forgot to mention that the young devotee was 18 years younger than I am.

We did end up having sex, and then hung out a few times and had sex again. It was very awkward because of the age thing, especially whenever we would walk by a store window or a mirror where I could see me and him walking together. It looked like mother and son. It also was rocky at times because the minute he realized he was seeking and it was all bullshit, he would say so and end the affair. But then the seeking would take over again and he would get caught up in the ego pattern of the sexual pleasure. We broke up twice and got back together within a week. I also was trying to be into it at my age, and I acted dramatically phony and sexual, and that was really stupid and hard for him to take! He showed everyone what I looked like doing it one night— very starkly ego-embarrassing! But it was pleasure, and that's what I was going for! The affair continued for about three weeks.

Finally it came down to whether we were going to move out and get our own place together? We decided no. I went upstairs and apologized to Santosha Ma and the household for disturbing things with this drama around the emotional/sexual ego pattern of pleasure. She allowed for us to stay. This is really Her Grace, the accepting, forgiving and never withdrawing Her Love. No matter what an idiot I have been, and whatever natural consequences follow, when I see Her, She is Love.

My grossest seeking was always within the emotional sexual. Santosha Ma showed me that I had no boundaries because of how I reacted to events in life, assuming relationships with men for pleasurable sex while accepting degrading treatment from them, that's just how it was. I had to try and control it as much as I could to get the pleasure I wanted and less of the bad treatment. This started at 15, and continued throughout my life, where I accepted the bad treatment and was very controlling. All part of the ego trip to fulfill by seeking. How can you be happy in that situation?! I have to say, now, at 61, I am done with it, by Her Grace alone.

Because I was willing to do these types of things sexually, there was no respect demanded on my side, and so men did whatever they saw they could, and it was quite a lot with me! I was willing to have sex with no love, no commitment, no caring, and showing the minimal expression of human cooperativeness. I also just wanted to be connected to a man for my own reasons that had no basis in reality, these included security, identity, human connection, and certainly sexual pleasure. And how pleasurable is it?! Not at all when I look back at the experiences. It is

imagination and avoidance mostly, and the brief sexual sensations. What a crazy way to live!  
(many years later)

On July 11, 2015, Santosha Ma offered to me to take a vow of celibacy. Without hesitation, I said yes. She had been showing me that my seeking in the emotional-sexual was still happening all the time in different ways, and She offered me this chance to practice with it—see it, release it (Say No!), just don't do it! Do something else! I now have something concrete to do to break the pattern. And it is not hard, or a mystery when I need to do it.

My celibacy practice is whenever a sexual thought or situation comes up, to say, “No! Santosha Ma is the Beloved of my life, and I will not do anything to mess that up.” She talked about saying “No” to sexual thoughts and situations, that it is not just saying “No.” She showed that previously I was using “willpower”, and that does not work. Willpower reinforces what you are saying “No” to, it does not transcend the pattern. It is an ego activity, it creates karma. “You want to win at doing sadhana; *you're* going to do it! That is not it.” I told Her I was struggling and not winning! She said, “Yes, and you will get tired of the struggle, and what then? It all comes back turning love to Me. Turn to Me, not the pattern” I do the sadhana, not you. You turn it into winning at something—that is ego. I am doing the sadhana, turn to Me.”

Saying this new complete “No” is so different, because I feel my love for Her, that is where my attention goes, and I feel grateful for the practice. It is Grace. I say the whole phrase every time. Santosha Ma helped me to feel how awful it really is to seek in the emotional sexual. I don't want to do it anymore! I am convinced by seeing my own seeking in the emotional sexual, and the consequences! This was all Her work, It is the miracle of Her Grace, the True Guru's Gift. I am so grateful to do this, rather than create more suffering for myself and others. I love You, Beloved Santosha Ma. Thank You.

## 10) Arrogant Conceited Ego – “The Know It All”

### Ego # 3

Santosha Ma has repeatedly addressed my arrogant, conceited attitude. I take possession of ideas, acting like I know things which I really don't. It's a gift! I just have to be right! Santosha Ma finds this very annoying and offensive. It is the self-contraction expressed in yet another way. Santosha Ma has used various techniques over the years to try to break my stubborn, special-one egoic pattern.

There was the time I showed Santosha Ma a new hiking trail and I acted like I owned it myself. I discovered it, it was mine!! It was so bad, She almost didn't want to walk the trail. I have done this numerous times trying to be the special one by “Discovering Something Just for Her.” Even the tone I use when commenting on something showed my arrogance.

For example, several years back I went with Santosha Ma to the Eastern Sierras to see the fall colors. She took me on a walk behind the Mono Lake Visitor Center. I said “I didn't even know this was here”—as if I knew all the trails in the area, but somehow this particular one escaped my observation. She called me on it, saying that was how I always take ownership of any situation, that I know all this stuff about everything. This is so arrogant. I was surprised at first by Her reaction because I am so blind to this hidden agenda, even though She repeatedly pointed it out. The ego is always ready to express this pattern. Internally I get righteous and feel I have been wrongly accused, but that is only because I hold onto a superior attitude. It is sickening how constant the special one appears as my dominant ego pattern.

Santosha Ma addressed this pattern again recently on a trip to Hawaii with Her women devotees. I acted like I knew all these places we could visit because I had been there before. I actually told some of the women about a trail which was extremely steep and hard to climb, which I conveniently forgot to tell the women about before they went on the trail. The two women who hiked the trail were very pissed and I had the gall to ask how the hike was because I myself wasn't physically able to actually go on the trail.

There was a period of time that whenever I opened my mouth, Santosha Ma would yell, “Liar, Liar.” It took me aback. I didn't think I was lying. Santosha Ma was trying to shock me to see my underlying assumption that I knew everything and was constantly creating identity around my assumptions. She dubbed me “Miss Know It All” and would throw that out whenever I went to explain anything. It was so important to be really special by knowing everything. If I had only worked hard at something and actually gotten good at the task, but I didn't. I was totally missing what Santosha Ma was trying to get me to recognize, that I am always trying to create identity for myself (separate self sense) instead of just keeping my attention on Her.

I did it again just a few weeks ago, undermining a project so I could own it. I withheld an interview of Santosha Ma I had which would have added some wonderful material to a project a group of us were completing. I had some twisted reason in my head why this was okay, but it was really just me wanting to take possession and be in control of the project. I wasn't the most capable person to complete the project, but I felt this drive that I take control. It all felt gross, but I still did it and then compounded the previous ego trip by going around the project leader and directly to Santosha Ma who did not want to be involved with the project. And worst of all, I was blatantly

taking possession of Her work. I was so abusive to everyone in this obsessive need to be recognized. I saw how each failure just made me more crazy, all the more desperate to succeed.

This obsessive, possessive attitude and constant attempt at ownership extends to everything in my life, not just Santosha Ma, I am also possessive of family, friends and ideas. “I saw it first.” “I knew that” “That’s what I thought.”

Santosha Ma spoke to me about my need to be right, She said “So being right isn’t the same as loving, is it?” I keep thinking there is some special one under all of my self-glorifying thoughts and actions, some noble and good person. I believe part of me is “this good, misunderstood person.” There are not two people, one good, one bad, only one ego trip. But as I still play out this belief system, Santosha Ma is trying to show me that this is what keeps the ego trip going.

When exposed, the special me ego trip flips to the “poor me” victim. The greater the desire and actions to be special, the greater the enactment of the victim persona. When I don’t get the recognition I desired, I am a big failure. “Oh poor me, I am the worst person.” I deserve to be special. It’s a constant flipping back and forth of these two sides of the same coin. Now I am winning, oh no, now I am losing. Desperate in my unfulfillment, I must work harder.

I also played out the special me at work, trying to convince everyone how important I was and all the great work I was doing. Santosha Ma never believed this self-glorification, which would infuriate and frustrated me and make me try even harder to show Her I was right. I even did all these unnecessary tasks at work to make me look good. Again, it was an ego trip of my obsession to get recognition and acknowledgment.

Santosha Ma realized I was addicted to knowledge and teased me about being Ms. Know it All. She continues to pull the right treads to unravel the ego patterns I have defended all these years.



## 11) I am a Hoarder

### Ego # 3

Santosha Ma pointed out that I hoard. I hoard because I don't trust that I will have enough. I hoard because I don't trust the Divine. I always have a backup plan for my back up plan as Santosha Ma put it. It's from fear. Fear of death really—that I can't control anything, so I try to make sure I have enough. That I'm protected and safe. But I can't make it safe. It isn't safe for Her, me or anyone. Life is what it is and death is inherent in life. These crazy hoarding patterns I developed to deal with the uncertainty of life didn't help me, but I didn't see their craziness until Santosha Ma pointed them out—instead I actually defended them. Imagine that, the ego defending a fear or a set of patterns.

A number of years ago I had the service of cooking for Santosha Ma every day for 9 months straight. I loved having this service. She invited me to live in Her house as the “renunciate couch person” to push my practice. I was delighted and nervous at the same time—to move directly into the fire. I only lasted three months. I had taken over Her kitchen with all my culinary paraphernalia, included large supplies of every spice that ever traveled the spice road. I also had a decent supply of food. My stuff had infiltrated Her cabinets and refrigerator. I argued that I “definitely needed all this stuff” in order to cook for Her. I always presented the ego defense of, “But it's for You.” Out the door I went!

The next day I went to retrieve my stuff. Her husband had taken all my food and spices from inside the house and piled them on the garage floor. Sitting in one huge pile, I got the shock of what I had hidden away in Her house. I didn't think I could fit it all in my mid sized car. It was excessive. It was indulgent. It was inconsiderate. I had cluttered up Her house, which is a place of purity. There was no defense. The evidence was overwhelming. In disgust with myself, I threw it all away. Needless to say I was taken off of the cooking service for a while.

Since this hoarding episode, I have become more conscious of not hoarding, I recognize when the hoarding urge surfaces and I don't buy extra knowing I don't need it. Santosha Ma has shown me the craziness of my actions by shocking me with the lesson. Ego transcending actions must be confrontational, difficult and challenging.

## 12) Motherhood and Attachment

### Ego # 3

I have done numerous ego trips around motherhood. I thought I was responsible for my children beyond keeping them fed, warm and healthy. I felt I was responsible for who they would become. I am not. Santosha Ma worked hard with me over the guilt I felt at the end of my marriage, that somehow I had done irreparable damage to them and ruined their lives. This was a major ego trip I kept feeding. Santosha Ma kept saying I don't have that much power to affect someone else, to make or break them, nobody does. Worst of all, Santosha Ma had to suffer the abuse of this guilt and sadness I carried in me, blaming Her at times for my sadness. Me holding on to all that sadness and guilt was a real insult to Santosha Ma. I should have been grateful and happy for Her wonderful gift of grace and that I got to live my life with Her.

Recently when my son called to say he was getting married, Santosha Ma pointed out how I still enacted all the female programming response of a mother—I was jealous that another woman was the main woman in the life of my son. I still had this feeling that I owned my children and they owed me. This is a real power trip and the parent/child relationship was battle ground. All these feelings were unconscious in me and I was shocked when Santosha Ma exposed them. Even though I was not happy with the relationships, I kept the programmed dynamics going by my reactionary behaviors and buying into the programming and the roles society have given woman—instead of breaking free using what Santosha Ma has repeatedly demonstrated. I was the one who needed to do the ego-transcending practice of accepting my son's choices and not following typical mother responses.

I went to my son's wedding and liked the man he had become. The woman he has chosen as a wife brings out the best in him, his sensitive vulnerable side. I watched his interactions with everyone and he was loving, considerate and playful. My son was sweet to me at the wedding and acknowledged our relationship. I shared the story of the trip with Santosha Ma and She said humorously while laughing, "Well, you fail at everything. You couldn't even ruin your son."

### 13) Entitlement to Good Health

**Ego # 3**

I have put way to much attention on my health. I would research symptoms and then go to the doctors with my new information. It was from my fear of death. When I developed rheumatoid arthritis, I went into high-gear anxiety. I was afraid of a lifelong disability, of being an invalid in constant acute pain. I was hopeful I could find a remedy to make my illness better. Santosha Ma said “Doctors aren’t going to save you from your mortality. Neither is all that information,” She told me to stop investigating any health issues on the internet or elsewhere. Originally, I felt a desperation that I needed to find ways to deal with my disease, but following Santosha Ma’s advice quieted my symptoms down, caused me to worry less and just accept my health challenges as they come. I am a worrier and that hasn’t gone away, but my attention has decreased on the never ending aches and pains of aging.

I idealized my health based on my feeling of entitlement. I felt it was unfair that I had to suffer and that I deserved the same good health that my family members experienced as they aged. The body breaks down in old age, as does the mind. This happens to everyone, but I get reactive and hysterical in response to the normal aging cycle, acting like it was personally directed against me instead of accepting it gracefully. Santosha Ma laughed at the absurdity of me thinking I should still be able to play tennis and racquetball at my age. “What do tennis and racquetball have to do with Enlightenment?” She said.

I learned I was not entitled to good health. My role was to tolerate my aches and pains and put up with them, no complaining. Santosha Ma has said often that all age groups have their own sets of aches and pains, it’s just the older we get and closer to death, people want to collapse and not put energy into their lives or bring energy to the room. No matter how crummy we feel, we can always bring love into the room.

## 14) Super Social Worker

### Ego # 4

The ego trip I played as a social worker was to keep asserting that I was on some great mission to save the children from being unnecessarily removed from their families. I held it up high as a spiritual medal to be admired by all, I was fighting for the downtrodden, some kind of spiritual hero, superior to all those who didn't have such a grand mission.

In actuality, my attitude prevented me from being effective at my job in addressing the problems I proclaimed to care about. My ego was already satisfied by the mere title of being a social worker, who needed the skills or the deeper understanding of what was best for each situation.

I would be frustrated by the perceived injustices I witnessed at work, I would focus on them and want justice done. Santosha Ma pointed out that I live in a negative mind at work. I acted like I knew what was best for the children, but Santosha Ma pointed out that some of the children might have died unless they were taken away from their family. She also pointed out that I didn't know what was best, I may have felt differently if I'd talked to the specific case worker who had removed the child and knew the situation.

Santosha Ma has given me over the years, suggestions on how to solve my problems at work and transcend my ego trip at my job. But I did not act on them. If I would have cared to transcend the ego trips at work, I would have grabbed Santosha Ma's ideas and run with them. I guess I liked the drama better. And let us not forget the false recognition and self-glorification.

My social-worker ego was committed to being the special one instead of the person who was driven through kindness to understand and right the injustices. The special one is not real, but I supported it like it was real. My special mission was delusional. The special ego is mean and hard hearted, it only focuses on itself, obsesses on the me, me, me. It has no capacity to love and truly care for others. Other people are there to be used for whatever the ego can get! The ego's true motive is seeking.

When I returned to work I could no longer play the special me role and act like I had this mission that would save the children. I went back to work noticing this pattern and how it was acted out. I had to change. It was too painful for everyone. I began to focus my training with the social workers on what they needed to know to make the best decisions that they could make. I also committed myself to give credit to the good decisions made instead of pretending the decisions were not up to my standards. I tried to be as humble as possible in making these difficult decisions.

## 15) The Best Special Devotee - Part I

### Ego # 4

The worst ego pattern that I repetitively enacted with Santosha Ma was my forceful determination to have Her on my own terms. No matter what effect it had on Her, I felt entitled to be the special devotee because I was a kind and caring person who loved and cared about my Guru. I constantly wanted and demanded Her attention. I also asserted that I knew Her better than any other devotee and I was always right in what was best for Santosha Ma. I was driven with jealousy and competition. All these unnecessary emotions created an overbearing personal attachment to Santosha Ma instead of recognizing Her as the Divine.

I wanted her attention and time because it felt great to be around Her, my problems would drop away in Her Divine presence. The problem was I didn't conduct the ego-transcending practices on my own that would have given me more relaxed time (low anxiety time) to put attention on my Guru when I wasn't in Her company. I kept throwing away the Real moment of love and recognition for the choice to continue my seeking to be the special devotee.

As the special devotee, I felt entitled to know the intimate details of Santosha Ma's life. If I was left out, I would become fearful and paranoid. I had no ability to see the ego or admit I was responsible for my paranoid feelings and subsequent actions. I became insecure and scared when I was not invited to be in Santosha Ma's presence. My ego trip was that I truly felt entitled to be the special devotee getting all Santosha Ma's attention whenever I wanted.

The following are examples of my special devotee ego-trips. Believe me, I have a lifetime of examples, I tried to pick out those that illustrate the ego mechanisms, so you, the reader, might recognize the elements of the ego trips with your own ego play. Remember, ego trips are basically all the same, just horses of a different color.

In 2002, Santosha Ma started to limit my daily access to Her because of my relentless demand to be with Her and run Her life. I plotted and called Santosha Ma daily to perform some service I made up that had to be done, and only I, super devotee, could accomplish. It peaked one day when all my housemates, except me, were invited over to see Santosha Ma. I became reactive and hysterical, the anxiety reached a crescendo with me pacing the room, feeling separate. Santosha Ma called the next day and asked me "What's going on?" She said She could not tolerate this negative reaction, I was hurting Her with this behavior and it had to stop.

Santosha Ma had me move out of the household, find my own place, I could not come to meditations, teachings or holiday events, do any service except deliver my patronage or contact anyone in Santosha Ma's circle. It was time to confront the ego directly. I was shocked, but also relieved, Santosha Ma created a new living circumstance that closed the door that I could no longer traverse. She was not angry with me, but rather She was explaining it to me as one might correct a child. There was immediate relief from my frenzied, paranoid patterns. I was now driven by a purer motivation, the motivation to show Her that this ego trip could be transcended and that I would not hurt Her with my special-devotee egoic pattern. Santosha Ma called me a month later to ask what I was learning. She continued to correct and guide me. Three months later Santosha Ma came and visited me and gave me instructions on how I could return to the circle and participate in the life there.

In 2011, these patterns were evident again, when I moved to an apartment that was under another devotee's apartment. Santosha Ma would visit the other devotee and I would get jealous and come outside to say hello, but really to get Her attention. She would ignore me and tell me to go inside. I would get obsessed with getting Her attention. I never just said, "Oh this is the self-contraction and I am seeking fulfillment in trying to get Santosha Ma's attention."

Santosha Ma continued to show me that She was impersonal, She was not attracted or bound to the ego. She would continue to show me my ego patterns and all the while demonstrating Her purity that is not personal for one, it is one with all, the True Innocent Heart Being.

In April of 2013, Santosha Ma gave me the service to archive all Her artwork. I was responsible for it completely and had to manage other devotees. It was a wonderful and challenging time for me; full of Santosha Ma's Grace. I was happy serving Her without focusing on the special one. The task demanded my full consideration and constantly being prepared to direct people with the next task. In addition, I got to see all of Her artwork, all stunning pieces, from the earlier ones to the most recent. She told me this feeling of satisfaction was because I focused on the task and didn't demand Her attention.

In September of that same year I forgot this gem and could not let go of the desire to do intensive service. I began to help another devotee with the service of archiving Santosha Ma's written and spoken teachings. The special me patterns while doing service were again brought to the surface by my excessive need to do self-fulfilling service instead of ego-transcending service. I was obsessed with what I thought I should be getting instead of relishing the opportunity to be doing service for my Guru. I became more demanding with the other devotee and wanted to take control of the service. Internally, I demanded that Santosha Ma give me more service.

Santosha Ma came by the my house to drop off some pictures that needed framing and told me that I needed to understand that demanding Her attention was hurting Her. She could not give to me the personal attention I was demanding, even if She wanted too. She is not a personal one or anybody else for that matter. She told me that I keep insisting on Her attention. She said that whenever She sees me in these patterns, She wants to get away from me because She could not give me what I wanted. She told me this behavior has to stop or She could not be around me. She made it clear that this behavior was all about the special one. Besides hurting Santosha Ma, I was allowing the illusionary ego strategy to be real. I agreed to stop this behavior because it was so hurtful, and as She pointed out it was not working.

This was a meeting I would never forget as Santosha Ma was very vulnerable and loving, but also firm in persisting in showing me my seeking patterns around the especial one. Something stuck in my head that day about my entitlement to be the special devotee. Even though patterns still come up, I know I can't blame Santosha Ma or others for my ego patterns or my hysterical feelings. Santosha Ma made it clear that I was solely responsible for my ego patterns. I am not a victim of anyone except my own delusion. It becomes a problem when the pattern arises and I choose to be unconscious and obsess about my desires. It was not the desire to do service that was the problem, it was the demand to do service that caused the suffering. Santosha Ma has created a formal, loving relationship with me that does not allow the special devotee patterns to go unnoticed, She corrects my ego trips and demonstrates the Real Truth around ego transcendence. That is the grace of Her pure Love, and the truth of Her life as the impersonal one.

She is the change, because without Her Grace and Love, there is no breaking our strangle hold on the cycle of unconscious ego patterns.

I currently have a service at Santosha Ma's house to clean several sacred statues and surrounding areas once a week. I do not expect Santosha Ma to come out and be social, nor do I expect any attention. Instead, I work on saying her name inwardly (japa) and concentrating on the service. If I hear Her voice or see Her, I feel blessed with Her Darshan. She does stop and say hello, and asks me how I am doing, or gives me a quick teaching or a nudge, but the difference is that I do not demand her attention. I love Her dearly!

## 16) The Best Special Spiritual One – The Sequel

Ego # 4

I was shocked when Santosha Ma told me that I presented myself as a superior spiritual person who really knew and understood Her. I appeared to follow the teachings, but asserted that I was in fact superior. I was driven to “look good” and be admired as spiritual and close to Santosha Ma.

I remember one night at the household we called the Hawk’s Nest, Santosha Ma told me I had a really big spiritual ego, and I was a fake and a phony. I felt the truth and clarity in what She said, but it scared me to see myself that way. I contracted away from the very help Santosha Ma was offering because I couldn’t bear to look bad or ego-embarrassed. I recoiled, pretending not to be upset by Her words.

My housemates gave me feedback that I was being mean by acting superior when I was trying to control everyone, be in charge and look good in the household, I retaliated internally with justification for my actions, and wanted to point out how they were also acting in this way, mutual blame instead of accepting total blame. I allowed some of it to sink in and accepted that a wee bit of their criticism might be true. But I continued to say what I thought people wanted to hear (the right answer) hoping the attention would shift to other devotees and their ego trips. But I could never hide now that my secret had been exposed and the truth spoken!

Santosha Ma considered the spiritual ego with others in the group, and it was a relief to hear that I was not alone. However, in time Santosha Ma decided that since I could not see or feel how I was affecting others, I had to have some disciplines to help me consider my spiritual superiority ego.

- I would have no voice in decision making in the household.
- I was not to call the landlord or assert any power in the household.
- I was to take no responsibility for organizing the bills in the household,
- I was not to offer anyone feedback about their behaviors, and
- I was to sincerely listen when others corrected me and remain quiet.

At times Santosha Ma would come over on a Sunday afternoon and check to see how the new rules were being followed and to give further instruction.

One night during a teaching consideration, Santosha Ma went into my bedroom where I had a set of large wooden statues of Rama, Hanuman, Sita and Lakshmana that I was keeping for Her, I also had shelves that used to be Santosha Ma’s filled with all kinds of beautiful and fun items. I also had a necklace that She gave me for my birthday displayed on a table. It all shouted, I am the special spiritual one, I possess all of these special gifted items from Santosha Ma; I was oblivious to this spiritual conceit. She told me to move the statues into the living room and get rid of the shelves and all the special spiritual knick-knacks. This was a challenging time, I had a hard time allowing a glimpse of the truth to surface. But it was the truth.

It would take longer for all of us to see how the household at the Hawk’s Nest was dominated by each person at different times. We could not live in a cooperative, human situation without our worst characteristics coming out. However, we did see in time see that we were all mean to each



other.

The challenge remained for me to acknowledge that I was a mean person. It wasn't until I listened to the recordings of considerations during Santosha Ma's summer retreat in the Eastern Sierras that I really felt the effects of my behavior on Santosha Ma and other devotees, it was heart breaking to feel. But necessary!

In addition, in that same recording, Santosha Ma revealed that it felt like She was going to drop the body at least once a day, sometimes several times a day. I was stunned and felt an urgency to do anything I could do to keep Her here. I understood that this would require the love of Her devotees and to serve Her meticulously. This was not a job for a fake and a phony, it was the job for a true devotee. Santosha Ma constantly forgave me for all my mistakes. She is always setting us free to love and to recognize that we are never separate from our Beloved Master. Jaya Santosha Ma!

## 17) Righteous Sexual Fantasy

Ego # 5

I was extremely fortunate to live with Santosha Ma for almost 20 years as her devotee, husband and housemate. Although I did not take full advantage of the spiritual possibility, it was a wonderful period of my life, which I miss very much. I brought it to an end with the event I am about to describe.

Although I was given a circumstance to do counter-egoic work, I remained a seeker who was not willing to go through the difficult lessons of egoity or practice the challenging aspect of counter-egoic work. On May 3, 2015, Santosha Ma's birthday, Santosha Ma asked me to do a puja for Santosha Shakti in the seclusion room at 10 am. I was happy and excited to do it. When I began the puja, I felt a playful, sensuous energy coming from Santosha Shakti. It was my own energy, but I preferred to believe it was coming to me from Her. I heard the Goddess tell me that she was working through one of Santosha Ma's young female devotees. I laughed and said "What does that mean?" Again, I manufactured this experience to allow me to justify connecting with the young devotee in a "spiritual" way. She answered "I'll show you." Dialing up the drama.

This is a story of how I fooled myself into doing something I should not be doing, and finding a stupid way to make it seem okay. I knew deep down that I was playing a game with myself, but I played on anyway, I was enjoying the sexual buzz I was creating.

The birthday party started at 11 am and we ate, opened presents and some went swimming in the pool. I went to the pool, where the young devotee, along with Santosha Ma's daughter and granddaughter were swimming. I thought how "Divine" this young devotee looked, playing along with the Goddess fantasy. I dialed up emotions of adoration and thought how perfect she is.

Why am I doing this now? Can't you see there is no possibility that anything good will come of it? I didn't ask these questions soon enough. I saw something I wanted and felt I was entitled to get what I want.

Looking back, I think I believed that this mental seeking was harmless pleasure. No one would know or care. I would enjoy it, then let it go and that would be the end of it, but that was not how it went at all.

As the days and weeks went by, I continued to think about the young devotee. I fantasized about holding hands, telling each other how much we loved each other. And sex.

As we were all walking one evening after meditation, I had a horrible feeling of jealousy. I was creating this imaginary connection between myself and the young devotee, and her attention on anyone else was painful. I thought, how can this be love if I can't allow her to enjoy herself? This also brought up feelings of inadequacy, since I was pretty sure she didn't really feel about me the way I felt about her. Jealousy, inadequacy, competition...all because I won't let go of a crazy emotional/sexual ego trip. Why? Because I deserved to get what I wanted.

And so this unconscious, seemingly harmless fantasy, surfaced and became a conscious horror. I began to feel there was something physically wrong with me. I was having trouble sleeping. I

would wake up many times during the night in torment, wondering if I should walk over to the young devotee's house and ask her if she loved me or not. Then, if I knew the truth, I could let this obsession go. But no, I promised myself I would never involve her. This has nothing to do with her. It's my problem. I was convinced that there was something wrong with my brain.

At breakfast one morning in mid-June, six weeks after this started, I looked awful and Santosha Ma asked what was wrong. I started to cry and said I couldn't tell her. I was too ashamed. I told her and she was extremely kind. She said she suspected something like this. She said just let it go, don't bond to it. I was so relieved. I thought it was over. I thought I could be free of this obsessive torment.

But I couldn't let it go. The next day at work, I was an emotional wreck. I read a news story of someone attacked by a shark and started to cry. Everything would trigger tears. I left work after a couple of hours and came home. I was convinced now that something was wrong with me and I needed medical help.

I tried to find a psychiatrist who could see me, but was unable to, so I went to the emergency room. They said the only way I would be able to see a doctor soon would be to be admitted into the mental hospital, so that's what I did and started on antidepressant medication.

When I got back home, Santosha Ma had asked another devotee and Her son to come and talk with me. I was angry and not ready to face them and stomped out of the room. I went to the local Motel and got a room. As I sat there alone, I realized I had no future alone, so I went back to the house, where Santosha Ma and the guys were still there talking.

Santosha Ma explained to me that I needed to move out because I needed to be accountable to my friends, rather than hide behind her. I understood what she was saying, but I was very upset to leave.

I found a house to rent and moved within a few days. In the next few weeks I adapted to living alone and enjoyed meeting with the other men each week. Santosha Ma asked me a few weeks later if I would take a vow of celibacy. I was immediately willing and grateful. Although I was not considering it, the simplicity of closing that door was attractive. She asked me to be truly faithful to her and I am happy to feel that I can be, even if I had failed in the past. This meant not having any sexual fantasies, if a sexual thought came up, I would not continue a sexual thought loop extending the fantasy to the accompanying buzz, so on and so on. I would not pump sexuality towards women. In summary, I would be totally conscious and accountable for my sexual thoughts and energy.

This event showed me the extent to which I am patterned as the entitled one who expects to get what he wants. I have not been faithful or kind. I have a lot to learn about the purifying work of breaking these patterns. It also showed me how lucky I am to be with a Great Guru who is always the perfect example of Love and has helped me through every difficult ego trip I have played out.

## 18) The Emotional Sexual Idiot

Ego # 6

Looking back at this time is not pretty. This essay summarizes my emotional sexual patterns I have had my whole life. I would like to blame it on some childhood issues or someone else, but I can't! I am totally responsible.

The first episode was when some of us in Santosha Ma's circle were experimenting with open marriage. I was not exploring open marriage from a loving inquiring, I was exploring it from who I could I have sex with. I told many women during this time of this great opportunity they could have with me. Almost all declined. I gleefully told my wife of our new lifestyle.

The worst night was a gathering with Santosha Ma at a house several of us were living that turned into a party. It was the night that Santosha Ma told us of how we were not following Her teaching and She was very hurt. I remember this part clearly, She was sitting on the couch, almost in tears, telling us of this failure. Even after Her heart felt confession, I keep on drinking and dancing, just wanting another sexual episode, dancing with and kissing women. One of the most embarrassing parts of the evening was seeing my young daughter (9-years old) react to me dancing with other women that were not her mother. She would come over and try to pull me away. Wanting me to stop. I didn't listen to her actions and shooed her away. I thought I was the stud, a gift for all women.

But I was really a slave to my sexual desires and explained it away as a progressive lifestyle. I actually thought that it was as simple as loving women in the moment and that was all that was required. When in reality I did not want the commitment. If any women ever gave me attention (sexual or not) I took this as a signal to move forward with them, pumping them with my sexual desire, in the hope of having sex. I would feel this buzz in my sex chakra as some great feeling associated with love or a higher tantric energy. What a fool I was!

At the end of the night, we were all deciding where to sleep, when I offered my friend and his wife to share the bedroom with me and my wife. My friend's wife was flirting with me at the party and I thought about her earlier as a possible hookup. When we were settled, I suggested we switch partners. It was not a loving gesture, but I was not willing to go beyond casual sex. I wanted to dominate and have sex with this woman. I did not care how she felt or how uncomfortable it was, it was just another opportunity. Looking back, I am sure that the woman was pumping me with sexuality that night, but I still took it as an opportunity, no foresight of what I was doing or how I was hurting my Guru, this women, my friend, or my wife, just as long as there was a buzz involved. The biggest hurt was hurting my Guru on such a sad night for Her.

In the next couple of days I was marveling how great this open marriage experiment was going, until the tables were turned. My wife wanted to have sex with a younger devotee she liked and I cried out "How could you do this to me". I was hurt and she consoled me like a baby. The three of us visited Santosha Ma that weekend and I tried to take credit for them hooking up, it was all my idea, like I set everything up, allowed it to happen. This was the only way I could feel good—by believing I was in control. The young devotee saw through this charade and so did Santosha Ma. Before this period, Santosha Ma agreed that I could move to Three Rivers, but She withdrew this offer understandably. She said I was way too immature to seriously be with Her. My friend

and his wife ended up getting divorced as a result of that night, my wife eventually ended our marriage for my continuous promiscuous behavior.

After our marriages ended, I had an affair with the same devotee. I was just as dominating as the open marriage period. We were on retreat with Santosha Ma in the Eastern Sierras and ended up sharing a bed together. I denied that I was happy about this situation. The first night we kept our distance, but there was definite sexual tension between us. In the morning, the woman reported to Santosha Ma about how much sexual energy she felt. We ended up having sex the next afternoon when Santosha Ma was on a hike. After the sex, I was very nervous and upset about my actions. I waited outside for Santosha Ma to come back from the hike and take away this rotten feeling. I was sorry and wanted everything to go back to normal, no ego trips, just normal, no mistakes. However, when Santosha Ma offered me to sleep on the couch instead, I declined, I wanted to keep this sexual play going with this women. I also thought I could have a Guru and a girlfriend at the same time. During one hike in Yosemite, Santosha Ma asked everybody what they were thinking about, everybody said their sexual partner, how disappointing this was for Santosha Ma that Her devotees were not thinking of Her. I was having sex right under Her nose during a spiritual retreat. How awful!

Our affair lasted about 3 weeks. I completely dominated this women during sex, I suggested and encouraged kinky sex. I played along as a lover and even told her I loved her to keep the affair going. I remember her coming back from a trip with Santosha Ma confused about our relationship. I did not explore her feelings of confusion, I just wanted to keep having a sexual partner. Shortly thereafter, I went on a trip with Santosha Ma and She worked with me to see how I was treating this women, offering this women a fake lover, who was not loving, and also how this women seduced me. It was always about having sex and not a cooperative loving relationship or even seeing through the male-female charade.

However, there was also this competing blissful relationship with my Guru that I could not give up. Whenever I went to see this woman, I wanted to leave and go back to my Guru. Santosha Ma pulled me out of my sexual-emotional patterns and mistakes and showed me how my ego trips did not allow my love for Her to go deeper. I had many opportunities to end the emotional-sexual ego patterns before I followed through on my desires, but I always had to learn the hard way.

I did not want to write this story at first, I first submitted a lesser worst ego trip because I did not want to be exposed again, even though everybody knows my story. I understand the way a women seduces a man and how stupid men are to fall for the same seduction over and over again without exploring a different pattern. I am 60 years old and finally realizing the consequences of a runaway emotional sexual ego trip-train and knowing how to stop the thoughts before they leave the station.

Santosha Ma has said that every thought that arises around emotional/sexual must be shut down and not followed by another sexual thought, but these thoughts must also be given to the Guru for burning. Santosha Ma, as the Guru, is the one who burns our ego trips away, it takes more than just will power. It takes Divine intervention. I am sorry Santosha Ma for the hurt I have caused you.

## 19) The Fake Hiker

### Ego # 6

One of my worst ego strategies is bringing a fake enthusiasm to hiking with Santosha Ma. This ego pattern was also evident in other areas of my life, I would want to say the right thing and give the impression that I understood and was practicing the spiritual teachings. But I was faking it.

Santosha Ma is a great hiker and photographer. She is attentive to all details of the hike, all the nature around her, the views and especially the light and content necessary for a good picture. She is always looking up on the hike and giving Her regard to nature and the wildness. In contrast, I would be looking down and struggling with the hike, but didn't want to show it or admit my hiking grumpiness. I would portray this fake enthusiastic, "I Love Hiking" look when she would turn around and see me hiking behind her, and then, when She was not looking, the grumpy, miserable hiker was there.

Santosha Ma teased me about a photo she took of me while hiking that revealed the grumpy hiker. It is like wearing a happy mask when people were watching, but when I am not being watched, the mask slips away and reveals the contracted individual. What I didn't want to admit was this created a drain on Santosha Ma. Santosha Ma was doing Her nature work, but also having to take care of me on the hike.

I would also portray to the other devotees and people at work that I was this great hiker and loved being in nature. I did love being with my Guru and enjoyed some good hikes, but overall I focused on the struggles of the hike, and let my ego pattern dictate the mood. For such a great hiker, you would think I would be going out on my own. But I didn't. The few times I went hiking by myself, I would surely get turned around. One time after it snowed, I went for a hike by myself in Sequoia National Park. I was returning on the hike with my head down and not paying attention and mistakenly walked down this side trail without noticing. After about 5 minutes I realized there were not any tracks in the snow that should have been there from my hike in, I turned around and went back to the right trail. This showed me that all the times I went hiking, I relied on Santosha Ma. I even got lost once on a shuttle hike where I went off trail and passed Santosha Ma within 10-20 feet of each other. They had to wait for an hour at the trail head for me to return.

One other embarrassing hiker mistake involved a hike to Half Dome in Yosemite Park. We all took water on the hike, but I told everyone not to worry because I brought a new water filter. Towards the end of the hike at Nevada Falls, Santosha Ma asked me to fill up Her water bottle. I did and it came out different shades of gray and black. I thought it was defective. I failed to read the instructions before I left about running a few quarts of water through the filter before use. I put my Guru in danger of dehydration because I thought I knew what I was doing. I also implied I was good hiker for bringing a water filter along on the hike.

There are numerous other examples about my failures on hikes, but it all comes back to if I am keeping focus on the hike, looking up and realizing that the psychical complaining of body aches is just the ego and mind, the hike goes better. Santosha Ma does not expect me to be the greatest hiker, but She expects me not to have a fake enthusiasm about hiking or other parts of my life. To be honest with what I understand and try to problem solve beyond the fake attitudes and perceptions of my ego pattern.