

THE ROOTS OF MEGALOMANIA

Megalomania n : is defined as a delusional mental disorder that is marked by infantile feelings of personal omnipotence and grandeur .

Over the last twenty years this behavior has become a much larger feature on the landscape of human consciousness. In most lives there is a point at which there is a recognition or perception that innocence has been lost. Where innocence once was there is now a kind of cynicism, a pollution or sense of hopelessness or jaded outlook, either spiritually or worldly. There is a memory of something that was pure and fresh and clean.

In remembering that, there is a desire to reclaim it or get back to that, which is quite natural, because there is still an echo or taste of that freshness and time. The problem becomes two fold. Since the innocence is not being experienced, it is believed that it is no longer here, it is somewhere else. The other part of that is that where it is remembered is where it is assumed to be. So if you remember your childhood as being innocent there is a hope or attempt to get back to that childhood innocence. It is impossible to return to that time, it is gone, it is over, that childhood is over.

In that recognition there is a fear that that must mean that the innocence is over, since the innocence and childhood were so linked together. The issue becomes centered in the not knowing that the innocence that is sought in the past is already here at the bottom of all the experiences that have been layered on top. There have been violations, betrayals and misery, sellouts, and everyone is both the victim and the perpetrator of these. With the loss of innocence there is a sense that one is a victim. Then one becomes the victim or the victimizer, they are the opposite sides of the same energy pattern. There is then a search to return to this initial innocent experience.

At the bottom of all of this the innocence still exists. Give up the activity that is mental, it may have byproducts that are physical, circumstantial or emotional. However, the problem becomes the mental activity designed to return to sometime in your life when you knew yourself to be innocent and pure and powerful and free and good and holy and one with spirit. You give up the image of that or the attempt to get that back. The act of looking for the solution creates the problem.

You actually burn in the fire of this disillusionment, it is the experience of the loss of that innocence rather than trying to get this back, that serves. Most spirituality is about trying to get it back. If you put your mind into a trance with some of the most beautiful methods or techniques, it can work for a moment or two, or an hour, or a period of a retreat, with a mantra or a meditation practice or process. However, until the willingness to simply burn up in facing the self betrayal, the self violation, the self hatred, the self rape, the self theory, in facing that with out moving to fix it or make it

nice or make it comfortable or make it spiritual. Just to burn up in it, to not move into denying it, as if it is not there, because it is all one, and all god and all is perfect. Just give up those cliché statements. That is why the slack line works. You have to stand in the self-betrayal and burn in it, grieve in it. There is the possibility of recognizing that at the core the purity is still pure. There has been no violation there. No experience to you or from you can violate that. Then you know directly without doing anything who you are. Since you do not do anything to realize who you are, it is causeless. Who you are and the recognition of who you are both causeless. When you assign a cause to who you are then you have a definition of who you are, and that definition is a story. That story has an image and an emotion and circumstances, and it is subject to change. That story is subject to birth, death, betrayal, theft, rape, and hatred.

I have no interest in you having a better definition of who you are. I'm not interested in you having a better story of who you are, a place to escape to when things are rough or unhappy, or boring. My interest in spending time with you, is that you discover who you are and that there is no escape from that. In surrendering to what there is no escape from, you will meet the bigger deeper truth of who you are. Then there is a critical shift, where you do not relate to life as a series of definitions subject to change. You recognize the definitions and at the same time recognize that they are imposed onto life. Life is free of definition. Life itself, the energy that infuses every life form is free of definition. You are free of definition. You have objectified and defined yourself as somebody, good or bad, enlightened or unenlightened, you got it or you didn't get it, you kept it or you lost it, all of these are absurd definitions. The fear is to not define yourself at all.

I've observed the loss of innocence occurring at an ever more early age in children's lives as they are exposed to the violence in the media and the violent behavior of their parents who have been over exposed to violence in the media. Once over exposed to violence we become addicted to that which we are uncomfortable with. Violence demands more violence. What you focus on in life is what expands.

I'm presenting this material to help you see aspects of your own megalomania that result from the perceived loss of innocence. The sense of powerlessness and low self esteem flips into a series of stories and self definitions that become megalomania, an unrealistic belief in one's superiority, grandiose abilities, and even omnipotence. The self definition is characterized by a need for total power and control over others, and is marked by a lack of empathy for anything that is perceived as not feeding the self.

Although megalomania is a term often ascribed to anyone who is power-hungry, the clinical definition is that of a mental condition associated with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD).

Narcissism is most simply defined as self-love. Though it is considered healthy to care about your own well-being and have a healthy self-esteem, when someone loves himself to the exclusion of all else, and others become objectified to be used only to serve the self, this is no longer considered healthy.

There are different psychological theories about how and why NPD develops, most of which relate to the integration of different aspects of ego and self as a child, and the nature of the parental roles in that process. Regardless of theory, NPD is characterized by extremely low self-esteem, which is compensated for by delusions of grandeur and megalomania, a narcissistic neuroses, a highly configured self-definition. With the propensity to act only on behalf of one's objectified self, the unbridled need to feed one's ego, and the objectification of others to serve the power-hungry needs of megalomania, it is easy to see how this can be a recipe for disaster, especially when wrapped in a charismatic personality.

Los Angeles and the film industry is a magnet and perfect match for this behavior. Nearly every studio head and actor is dealing with addiction, megalomania, narcissism or sociopathy, they are all part of childhood compensatory behaviors. The fascinating aspect of these behaviors is that the dysfunctions along with a charismatic nature drives these people to major success at the expense of those around them.

One of the most well known examples of megalomania in modern history was Adolf Hitler. A street waif, Hitler wasn't content rising through the ranks to become the military leader of Germany. His megalomania drove him to aspire to conquer the entire world. Being born into a "superior race" also wasn't enough for the mentally ill Hitler. Instead, he wanted to wipe out all other races. This need to destroy everything outside of what he perceived as an extension of himself is a classic though horrifically illustrated example of megalomania. Paradoxically, a person who exhibits such tremendous ego and self-confidence in reality has such low self-esteem and such a fragile ego that he cannot abide any expression other than his own, for fear of annihilation of the "objectified self." Therefore everything that is not under his control is perceived as a threat.

The principles or characteristics of NPD and megalomania can also be expressed in lesser degrees or in a different fashion by those we might consider more mainstream than genocidal maniacs and serial killers. Among actors, executives, dictators, fundamentalists, and politicians we find those who view themselves as morally superior with the willingness to sacrifice, kill, or risk the safety of others considered inferior in order to assert their own agendas. Though there are legitimate circumstances in which leaders must exercise civil or military force, or religious zealots can profess solemn beliefs, the line between religiosity and fanaticism, between duty and megalomania, can be a gray one. This is how the term has become part of our culture's vernacular.

When you begin to set these self definitions aside and no longer do this behavior, the first fear is that you will not exist at all, that is the underlying fear. It is a strong deep fear that all the conditioning is attached to and it is true. When you stop defining yourself your self does not exist as any definition. You do exist, however not as a definition. You exist as who you are, conscious awareness; free, indefinable, inconceivable, undeniable and innocent.

