

Creating Healthy Relationships

**Primitive Ego Psychology for
Life Coaches and
Mental Health Counselors**

Taming the Primitive Ego

**The Journey toward Awakening and
Healthy Relationships**

Dick Rauscher



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INTRODUCTION

The important relationships in our lives are born out of love and compassion; qualities of our higher self. Unfortunately, our childhood primitive ego; the unconscious psyche our inner-child, is primarily focused on our own needs... not the needs of others. This unconscious self-focused part of our brain tends to dictate the quality of our relationships with others.

To nurture a loving relationship with others means that we have to;

- a) learn to tame our primitive ego,
- b) learn to own our own feelings,
- c) be willing to intentionally grow in self-awareness, and
- d) learn to manifest loving behaviors that focus on the needs of the other person... *without losing ourselves*, our *healthy boundaries*, or becoming powerless *caretakers*.

As we reach these goals, we are more capable of manifesting an authentic compassion that nurtures those we love... and create happy healthy relationships.

Only an awakened adult consciousness; a consciousness that has achieved a high level of self-awareness, has the skills and insights needed to tame the self-focused narcissism of the childhood primitive ego.

Life coaches and mental health counselors are often asked to help people dealing with high levels of anger, distrust, hurt,

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disappointment and grief in their marital, family, and workplace conflicts. It can be overwhelming and stressful for life coaches and counselors when confronted with the high levels of emotional energy present in relationships that are embroiled in conflict. Where do we begin? How do we “hold” the energy without getting caught up in the conflict? How do we avoid the perception that we are taking sides? These can be stressful questions for coaches and counselors; especially when both sides of the conflict assume that;

- a) they are “right” and
- b) you will take their side in resolving the conflict.

The insights and practices offered in this book are designed to introduce life coaches and mental health counselors to some of the skills and insights of Primitive Ego Psychology so they can begin the process of developing the skills needed to deal with the high levels of emotional energy they encounter when working with relationship conflicts. *When coaches and counselors understand how the primitive egos on both sides of the issue “think,” they have an increased ability to understand where the energy is coming from... and how to deal with it creatively.* When they understand primitive ego theory, they are better able to offer their clients the insights they will need to successfully resolve the relationship conflict that’s causing their distress.

Primitive ego theory offers life coaches and counselors

Only an awakened adult consciousness; a consciousness that has achieved a high level of self-awareness, has the skills and insights needed to tame the self-focused narcissism of the childhood primitive ego.

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insight into how the inflexible primitive ego beliefs and opinions used on both sides of the issue *created* the conflict. It also provides them with the knowledge to teach their clients the skills and insights they need to become more *self-aware* and move toward a lasting resolution of the conflict.

Until the clients can change the way they "*see*" the world, and "*how*" they think, real progress in resolving the conflict will be all but impossible. They can "negotiate" a compromise to resolve the conflict, but *the underlying issues that created the conflict in the first place will remain*. The potential for both parties to create more conflict for themselves in the future is almost guaranteed.

The childhood primitive ego insights offered in this book are meant to help life coaches, life coaching clients, mental health counselors, mental health clients, and person's interested in improving the quality of their relationships with others. These insights will help them;

- move beyond the illusions of their childhood primitive ego,
- embrace a deeper knowing that brings together their intellect and the wisdom of their heart and
- deepen the skills and insights needed to create healthy loving relationships.

My life passion is about awakening from the unconscious primitive ego of childhood to that of a more awakened and enlightened adult observing ego consciousness. Awakening our consciousness is achieved as we *intentionally* do the work of becoming more *self-aware* and learning to embrace the *realities* of the world we live in.

I wrote this book because I wish I'd had access to this kind of material in my early years as a life coach and counselor. The insights and life skills contained in Primitive Ego Psychology would have allowed me to better help my clients on their journey

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toward their goals and dreams.

Like most of us, I had very little self-awareness in those early years. Back then, I assumed awakening meant getting up in the morning. As a result, I unknowingly wasted much of my early life energy searching for deeper meaning and happiness in all the wrong places.

My hope is that this book is helpful for anyone whose life calling is adding value to the lives of others.

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Chapter 1

Growth In Self-Awareness & Taming The Primitive Ego

Creating healthy relationships requires a life-long commitment to taming our unconscious childhood primitive ego through *intentional* growth in self-awareness... learning to pay attention to the energy we are sending into the world, the beliefs or opinions driving that energy, and learning how our minds work.

The skills needed to create healthy relationships require that we awaken to the presence of our primitive ego, and to realize that our unconscious primitive ego exercises significant influence over the choices we make in our adult life. Taming the emotionally driven, knee-jerk reactivity of our primitive ego consciousness through *intentional growth in self-awareness is essential if our goal is the creation of healthy relationships with those around us.*

Until we tame our childhood primitive ego, happiness and success in life will be all but impossible to achieve.

From the moment we are born until the day we die, the values and meaning of our life will be defined by the relationships we create... *and the level of consciousness we use to create those relationships.*

Intentional growth in self-awareness is essential if our goal is the creation of healthy relationships with those around us.

The quality of every experience in life will be determined by the relationship we have “with” that experience.

Awakening our consciousness to the presence of our childhood primitive ego; and then taming that primitive ego through growth in self-awareness, are the two primary skills that will most determine the quality of the relationships we have with others; how happy those relationships will be.

Stated another way... if our goal is to improve the relationships we have with others... and be happy... we will need to *change the way we think*, and we will need to *become more self-aware*.

A Brief Introduction To The Childhood Primitive Ego.

The black and white, dualistic, either/or thinking we all learn in childhood, is often described as an early developmental stage of childhood. As young children, we sensed that everything ... whether good or bad ... appeared to come to us *from* the world. We knew we were powerless, so pleasing our caretakers was seen as critical to our happiness and sense of safety.

To accomplish that task, we split the world into the simple dualistic categories of good and bad, right and wrong, pleasure and pain. We learned very quickly that good and right brought more pleasure than bad and wrong. If we were “good” or “right”

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we were rewarded. If we were “bad,” or “wrong” we were punished.

*Until we tame our childhood primitive ego,
happiness and success in life will be all but
impossible to achieve.*

We were learning the *survival skills* needed to survive as children in a confusing and sometimes frightening adult world.

At about seven years of age, our core self-identity was complete. We were able to experience ourselves as a unique “*self*” ... a “*self*” or “*i*” separate from everyone else. Our sense of “me” was born.

Developmentally, the primitive ego of our inner-child and all that we’d learned about life slid quietly, like cozy slippers on a thick carpet, into our unconscious... *including our illusion of separateness and our need to be “right.”*

Our Inner Operating System

A helpful way to think about the primitive ego of our inner-child is using the analogy of an operating system in our computer. The operating system of our computer is pretty much invisible, but without that operating system, our computer would not function. Everything we do or create on our computer is controlled by that invisible operating system. Until the day we awaken to its presence, *the primitive ego of our inner-child will be the unconscious operating system controlling who we are, and how we function in the world.*

Until we become intentionally self-aware and awaken our mind to a higher, more evolved adult level of consciousness...

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the unconscious primitive ego of our inner-child will continue to use its childhood beliefs and learnings *to unconsciously split the world into the dualistic categories of;*

- • “me” vs. the rest of the world,
- • right from wrong, and
- • good from bad.

We will *look* like adults. We will *behave* like adults most of the time. Emotionally, however, we will be seven-year-old children *pretending to look and act like adults*. We know it’s important to be compassionate, so we try hard *to be* compassionate. We *try* to show the world what *we think* the world wants to see. However, *our façade of compassion will quickly disappear the moment our primitive ego feels its self-identity, beliefs, and opinions are being challenged or threatened.*

When we feel threatened, our primitive ego will immediately begin to unconsciously “knee-jerk” a negative, defensive, survival-of-the-fittest energy into the world. Visualize the reaction of a seven-year-old child that has been told no, or that he or she is wrong. Our childhood primitive ego will emotionally insist that *we are “right”* and the *other person is wrong*. The result? Our dualistic right and wrong thinking will begin to clash with the dualistic right and wrong thinking of the other person and quickly escalate into conflict and emotional violence ... or worse.

Until the day we awaken to its presence, the primitive ego of our inner-child will be the unconscious operating system controlling who we are, and how we function in the world.

Our Primitive Ego Creates Unhappiness Because It Is Young and Immature; Not Bad

When I write about the evolution of our primitive ego consciousness and its important impact on the quality of our relationships with others, I am fully aware of how easily the initial awareness of our primitive ego can turn into self-shaming.

I continually remind readers that the unconscious primitive ego of our inner-child is not inherently bad or evil, it's just a part of our psyche that is not yet matured. It is the part of our over-all ego that contains our childhood beliefs, experiences, emotions, and memories of childhood... and the defensive *survival skills* we created to help us manage childhood.

Essentially it is the emotional maturity level or psyche of a seven-year-old child.

Being young and inexperienced is simply being young and inexperienced; not a shame issue. But until we awaken to its presence, our unconscious seven-year-old primitive ego *will be in control of our adult life and all of our adult relationships*.

And that is not a good thing if our goal is creating healthy relationships.

Allowing our primitive ego to unconsciously manage our adult life, using the insights and consciousness of a seven-year-old child, is rarely going to be helpful or work out well for us. No child that young has the mental capacity, maturity, or life experience needed to successfully cope with the responsibilities and challenges of an adult world; or healthy adult relationships.

The unawakened, immature, dualistic, right and wrong thinking of our childhood primitive ego too often creates pain and suffering for ourselves, and those around us. It unconsciously interferes with our ability as an adult to sustain the positive non-judgmental energy of true compassion—the

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energy we need to create healthy relationships... and a more compassionate world.

Our primitive ego is self-focused and loves to assume that we are;

- a) always “right,”
- b) that our beliefs and opinions always reflect “absolute truth,” and
- c) that “our” *self-focused* needs and wants should always take priority over the needs and wants of others.

As a result, our primitive ego is significantly limited in its ability to manifest mutuality or empathy; two important characteristics when we realize that;

- *everyone wants essentially the same things in life that we want*; happiness, the need to be loved, the need to feel important, the need to feel heard, and
- the need to *avoid criticism and conflict*.

In other words, until we awaken our adult consciousness and develop the ability to offer a sustained empathy and mutuality to those around us, the narcissism of our childhood primitive ego will continue to unconsciously create pain and conflict in our relationships with others.

Think about how you feel in the presence of a person whose primitive ego is always right, a person who always knows what you should do or feel, a person who does not need to listen to your point of view because they already “know” that you’re wrong.

Do you feel anger? Irritation? Annoyance? Most likely!

Because most people have not awakened to the presence of their unconscious primitive ego, there are very few people with the ability or level of self-awareness needed to remain compassionate and non-reactive in this situation. The primitive

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ego of all but a very small handful of people would quickly become defensive, angry, and aggressive.

I know this is hard to hear, but until “you” awaken, this is exactly the kind of negative energy that “your” unconscious childhood primitive ego is capable of sending into the world or generating in others.

A relationship between two people working with an un-awakened primitive ego consciousness will very quickly sink into a muddy swamp of never-ending emotional conflict. Picture two kids fighting on the playground when they disagree over whose turn it is on the swing. Or two adults arguing about whose political party is best, or whose religious belief is correct.

When the collective unconscious primitive egos of two people, or two countries, conflict over ideological issues of culture or religion, the potential for violence can escalate very quickly... *a scenario that is currently threatening the very future of our planet.*

As a therapist and life coach dedicated to the awakening of the human consciousness, I believe that awakening to the presence of our childhood primitive ego *is the most important work we can undertake as an individual or as a species.* This is especially true if our goal in life is peace and the creation of healthy relationships with others.

How To Awaken Our Consciousness and Begin The Journey Into A Deeper Self-Awareness

Taming our primitive ego begins by simply paying attention to the negative energy we knee-jerk into the world. This reactive negative energy is easy to see because it tends to create emotional conflict with those around us. Learn to pay attention to the reactions others have to what you say or do.

For example, when we become aware of the negative energy

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we are sending into the world as a result of our judgmental attitudes or behaviors, we can use that self-awareness to make a *conscious choice* in that moment to embrace a more *not-knowing* “emptiness” of ego. We can choose to quietly drop our childhood primitive ego’s knee-jerk need to be “right.”

This is the first step on the path into self-awareness that will allow us to individually and collectively begin changing the way we think. As we learn to pay attention to the energy we are sending into the world, it will begin to change the way we think... *and our ability to more consciously offer empathy and mutuality to others will begin to grow.*

In other words, our adult consciousness will begin to awaken, evolve and mature.

When enough of us have;

- • matured our consciousness through intentional growth in self-awareness,
- • emptied ourselves of our primitive ego’s opinions, beliefs and “certainties,” and
- • learned to listen deeply to what the other person is saying; *without either side having to insist that they are “right,”*

humanity will have taken a major step toward peace and the creation of a compassionate world.

Non-reactive listening does not mean you agree with the other person. It means you are simply listening to them without your primitive ego reactively judging them. You are beginning to listen in a way that allows you to search for the truths in the other person’s position. An adult level of consciousness called middlepath thinking.

...awakening to the presence of our childhood primitive ego is the most important work we can undertake as an individual or as a species.

A Self-Aware Consciousness Creates Healthy Relationships

The goal of an awakened adult consciousness is always growth in self-awareness and the *intentional choice* to offer compassion and loving-kindness to those around us. It is this *conscious intention* that will begin to tame the emotional reactivity of our primitive ego.

Authentic change takes time and practice, but it comes without effort when we understand that our primitive ego is not bad, it is simply the unconscious and immature ego of our inner-child.

As we tame the emotional noise of our primitive ego, we will begin to hear the still small voice of our soul; the essential *self* at the center of our being that reflects the reality or essence of who we really are. The part of us that has been gently calling us toward non-judgmental adult relationships of unconditional love and compassion.

As we grow in self-awareness, we become more aware that our primitive ego's unconscious need to use judgmental dualistic right and wrong thinking is only leading us into deeper levels of conflict and violence.

If our goal is the creation of more compassionate relationships with others... then learning to pay attention to our emotions, our behaviors, and the way we think all need to become part of a lifelong commitment toward intentional growth in self-awareness.

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The ability to manifest a non-judgmental energy toward others is “*our*” responsibility, our *choice*. Waiting for others to evolve and mature their thinking is not an option. If we want to create healthy relationships... *we have to be willing to offer others the kind of energy we would like to see and experience in the world.*

We always have a choice in the kind of energy we are going to manifest in the world. We can continue to manifest the emotional and reactive energy of our *unconscious* primitive ego, or we can *choose* to manifest the compassion and loving-kindness of a deeper awareness more matured adult consciousness. It’s our call.

When we choose to grow in self-awareness and intentionally mature our level of consciousness, we begin to understand that compassion is *not a feeling*, it is an *intentionally chosen behavior*. A behavior based on a commitment of the heart to develop the habits that create healthier relationships with others.