

One Meditation #11, November 2025 (Nov. 21-25, 583 w.)

One Meditation #11, Nov. 2025: “Should I lose my ego?”

Welcome to this eleventh meditation email and thank you for being here. Please consider sharing it with someone who might find it helpful. Monthly subjects range from modern to ancient, Western to Eastern, and scientific to spiritual. To unsubscribe, email me. For more info, see below. – Richard

“SHOULD I LOSE MY EGO?”

Some people who practice meditation wonder whether they should become egoless: a self-effacing lump of clay, unable to live comfortably in the world. As we advance in meditation, does it dismantle our personal, family, and professional life?

What is “ego”?

In my mid-teens, for six months I adopted a profoundly selfish ego by following a philosophy called Objectivism. Promulgated by Ayn Rand in her novel *Atlas Shrugged* and other writings, it was a harsh laissez-faire capitalism imposed socially and ethically. Rand stated that once society sets the basic rules for competition, you then should struggle selfishly to gain and keep whatever you can.

What it accomplished for me was losing a lot of friends. Even more important, it felt wrong. I’d been raised to be competent, yes, but also kind. Later, the Beatles recorded a song that well identified this period in my life: “I me mine... / All through the day / Flowing more freely than wine / All through your life” (“I My Me Mine”).

On the other hand, the American Psychological Association defines a healthy “psychoanalytic ego” as “the component of the personality that deals with the external world,” enabling a person “to perceive, reason, solve problems, test reality, and adjust...the impulses of the id [instinctual urges] to the demands of the superego [conscience].” This is the typical, rational-thinking operator’s manual people work with in life.

A Fuller Self

However, meditation asks of us to quiet even this normal ego and dwell at times, instead, in an observant silence or kindness beyond thoughts. Dag Hammarskjöld, the second U.N. Secretary-General of the United Nations, speaks of dissolving “the ego’s safe glory.” Then, he states, a person discovers “naked reality [s]hrouded in silence [and] wonder.... Only one... *I*... anchor[s] in... the mystery of life, and the consciousness of the talent entrusted to you...” (*Markings*). This “one *I*” for him was his awareness existing at times within him without need of words or emotions. He offers an example of such a special moment in the woods: “The light died in the low clouds. Falling snow drank in the dusk. Shrouded in silence, the branches wrapped me in their peace. When the boundaries were erased, once again the wonder: that *I* exist.”

What is Hammarskjöld’s “*I*”? It is the same as Richard Rohr’s “True Self” in *immortal diamond*, Thomas Keating’s “To be no self is to be the true Self” (*The Human Condition*), Martin Buber’s “I” in *I and Thou*, the Hindu scriptures’ descriptions of an inner “Atman” or spark of divinity, and others. It is a mystery wrapped in an enigma until you see it plain as day before you—your own awareness.

As we find this clearer consciousness increasingly in silence, love, and light, does it smash one's normal, healthy, talkative and emotive self that you've come to know? Yes and no. Yes, it slowly dissipates the selfish, self-centered, egoistic version that occurs when, for example, you suddenly realize you've thoughtlessly hurt someone. But no, it does not crush a person's emerging awareness—which, if anything, increases in breadth. This is why meditation is called “consciousness expansion.” In short, Hammarskjöld's “*I*” anchored in the “mystery of life” is his mindfully observant awareness.

Do I find my own “*I*”? Yes, but each day is different. Looking to it helps me dissolve, for a few moments, some of my self-centered ways, making me less negative, calmer, more loving. As in other forms of meditation, resting in it nurtures a fuller, better self—a flower blossoming with new petals of light, peace, and love.

Next Month: “When Can Music Be Meditation?”

Peace, Strength, Joy

Richard Jewell

richard@jewell.net, www.RichardJewell.org

“Meditation has two major definitions: (1) science says it is a conscious calming of the body and mind, and (2) experienced practitioners often define it as aware attention for the purpose of inner growth. Using these two definitions, the word “meditation” covers most major spiritual practices.... Mindfulness, too, say the Mayo Clinic and other scientists, is a type of meditating. All of these outer forms and more are linked by having, in common, very similar purposes and scientific results.” – “One Meditation #1,” Jan. 2025

© 2025 by Richard Jewell. Please forward this to others who may find it useful. If you're not on the listserve, email me to be added; your email is never shared. Comments and questions also are welcome. Number of subscribers: about 460. I've practiced meditation and researched it since the mid-1960s and have earned graduate degrees in the field. I hope you enjoy being on the list!

To see previous issues, go to <https://www.richardjewell.org/Meditation/default.htm>.

Oct. '25, #10: **“Can Jocks Meditate?”** From runner's high to mindful exercise, meditative awareness awaits. **Recommended:** Alan Sillitoe, *Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*
