

Grandiosity and the Empowerment of the Spiritual and Artistic  
by R.S. Pearson  
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## Introduction

I am not writing as a psychologist, nor claiming to solve serious mental health issues by this work. Those who have serious mental health problems related to grandiosity should see a trained psychotherapist.

Grandiosity is a cloud that forms over people's lives and blinds them to their real possibilities. It makes the person unable to function in the role that would be right for him or her. It most likely develops because a normal role in life was cut off from the person by a parent, a teacher, or someone else, but to see exactly how this happened takes some degree of psychological understanding. They may still be living in a circumstance where they are not able to get enough normal respect so they create a fantasy life in which they can get the respect they need. This fantasy life is not the usual idea of having a fantasy by creating a "visualization" of something in the mind. It is more complex, and in effect creates a worldview that has many unique properties.

Not being able to deal with having to achieve in the real world, one creates a world in which one already has achieved the important things in life. Believing they are doing something much greater than what "average" people do, they supersede any lack in the normal achievements necessary in life or which would be helpful for them in their artistic or spiritual path.

Focusing on the spiritual and artistic types of grandiosity is important because this is where some of the greatest growth in society can occur. If grandiose artists and spiritually-minded people became more empowered in what they could really do in the world, it would contribute much to society. If the grandiose can have their understanding grow, and develop more empowerment in their lives, they may find that the world needs them, as they believed it did, but in a direct way that has a very present application.

If more of the artistic and spiritual can achieve their true potential, we would live in a better world by the added creativity, acts of altruism and community involvement they would create. While we do live in a functional world, we cannot say that we live in a world that is optimal for most people. While each person is responsible for making his or her own life fulfilling and enjoyable, there is a common good that affects us all in some way, no matter how competent and empowered we are. Many of the most empowered and

financially successful people become philanthropists because they understand the need to think of the common good. The artistic and spiritually minded often have the biggest burdens to carry, which can be seen from studying history. One thinks of artists or philosophers like Kierkegaard, Melville, and countless others who, if not isolated, at least were at odds with themselves or others. Therefore, when they are more empowered, there will be positive change in the world.

Grandiosity is a psychological coping mechanism for a lack of real functionality and accurate emotional responses. It can be an exaggerated sense of one's own ability, wisdom, or importance, often in regard to how such things affect the quality of life. It is too painful to accept one's grandiosity as false. Like other types of delusions, the person having it often cannot be persuaded against it. The grandiose feel this condition as essential to their identity and needs. When they start to see the contents of their grandiosity as based on false values, they become insecure and feel pain.

One can meet people for whom the only type of abnormality they exhibit is the grandiose trait. One person may believe they are going to do something like write a book that would have extreme importance in the world, perhaps on the level of the Bible. They might be quite sincere about this and not understand the impossible nature of the statement. Another person may talk defiantly about how his painting style and technique was the best on Earth. He would spend his time belittling other living painters. Another one might talk about how he would give the world a new scientific worldview, one that would revolutionize everything, but have no hard science to back it up. Or, take for example, a person in a business that proposes ideas for marketing that only he himself could appreciate -- ideas that actually would guarantee absolutely no commercial success. He was molding the world around his concept, not using his perception of the rules of the world to influence his thinking.

Other behaviors of these people would be normal. Yet, when they talked about these specific aspects of their life, they had little grasp of reality as others perceived it. They had to make an adaptation that provided themselves with safety and a sense of self-esteem when the world was unwilling to grant them either.

One might argue it is a healthy aspiration for a person to work from the perspective that he or she will create a work that will usher in a new revolution in ideas. However, the rare people who created these kinds of revolutions probably did not herald their work in such terms. Such accolades are given by

others, not by the persons themselves. Often, the greatest artists and thinkers have the most humility. Some great artists and thinkers do have grandiose traits, especially in the cases where addiction plays a role. But these did not have a pure dysfunctional grandiosity, since they were, indeed, creating works that had the objective value of being some of the most important work of their time. They already had enough functionality to create great work, and successfully market or distribute it enough so that it survived. To the extent that the artist cannot do these things, the greater or lesser is their dysfunctional grandiosity. One might call the successful people who exhibit grandiosity, "functionally grandiose," in the same way we call alcoholics who can hold down a job while deep in their alcoholism, "functional alcoholics." The disempowered grandiose, those who cannot achieve professional or functional goals, could be called "dysfunctionally grandiose."

When the artistically and spiritually grandiose are empowered they may become some of the most caring and socially aware. Maintaining one's spiritual or artistic vision while creating a full and functional life is an excellent basis of one's life philosophy. It can become a force for good in the society around one because of its completeness. Having functionality guide their value system, the grandiose will then become free of their negative way of over-mystifying their life. This new manifestation of empowered spiritual and artistic people may ripple around the world and help lessen others' mental illness and other societal problems. Those who are being empowered are those who are most able to care because they are most able to understand other's suffering as they themselves have similarly suffered.

As many others did, I saw that the way the world was operated by powerful people was less than an optimal arrangement. The word "ignorant" could be used in describing the guiding principle of many people's actions. I could see that many problems people suffered from were caused by poor nutrition, a lack of basic self-discipline, and a simple lack of love that surrounded them. I saw that pollution problems could be solved, and that science itself was the force that could solve issues with the environment. Since this was true, all society, and especially the empowered in society, were to blame for the majority of the ills of the planet. Staying in this understanding alone could set the stage for a type of grandiosity, because powerlessness increases the chance of grandiosity. How this develops and may be overcome will be discussed in this book.

Like the word "codependency," grandiosity can be a hard concept to understand even though grandiosity has an important history in Western psychology. The word grandiose is in common everyday usage and exists in recovery literature. Grandiosity is one of the subjects most covered in doctoral level psychological works. Due to the possibly serious nature of grandiosity and the fact that it is covered so often by psychologists, I wanted to limit my study. This book gives insights in how grandiosity hinders the spiritual and artistic from achieving their goals. There are other areas covered that are not only related to the spiritual and artistic but pertain to grandiosity in general.

This book identifies how grandiosity occurs in the lives of those who are artistic and/or following spiritual paths. The cognitive distortion of grandiosity is experienced by the person as having a constructive purpose. They cannot abandon their grandiose thinking because for them it may be seen as a way of being heroic. Our insight must be careful to not criticize the motivation to be heroic, to be a great artist or great scientist. It is also not wrong to want to be close to God and be spiritual. The problem comes in when one can only be judgmental against what others are in certain capacities in light of what exaggerated abilities one believes oneself has in these capacities. Therefore, one misunderstands the true nature of one's authentic self because it is being modified against false natures ascribed to others. One neither correctly perceives the positive in oneself or the positive in others. These misunderstandings further complicate one's place in the world.

The grandiosity that happens to artists and spiritual seekers can be distinct from the more pathological delusions of grandeur and the grandiosity that can happen to people who do not have spiritual or artistic ambitions. The latter may be more narcissistic because the spiritual and artistic believe they are dedicating themselves to something higher, that being God or art.

I use the term spiritual often in the book so I should define what I mean by it. The use of the term "spiritual" in this book is not a qualitative judgment on people's ethical life but merely signifies the interest in spirituality. Since, I am attempting a somewhat objective look at what happens in people's lives in the area of grandiosity, I am not going to put in my own subjective views on spirituality. That would skew the book towards the direction of an author's own spiritual beliefs. Many define spirituality by a person's altruistic qualities and instead of the word "spiritual" they could also say "altruistic." Problems in grandiosity also happen to people who focus on altruism alone -- not on religion -- and have the same challenges in psychological health and empowerment.

Often there is a distinction made in people's minds between the terms "religious" and "spiritual." There are various areas of overlap and I am using the term "spiritual" because it covers all of these areas.

We have to use some religious terminology when discussing the topic of how spirituality and psychology interact, and this should be understood and accepted. The effort to secularize all areas of academic thinking is purely partisan, and innumerable great thinkers, such as Jung, Eliade and Sorokin to name just a few, have written with academic legitimacy on the value of the spiritual life. One cannot discuss the life of those with spiritual aims except to use terms that they themselves use to define their worldview. I try to do it without the levels of abstraction that makes it impossible for the layman to understand. When speaking of God, I describe God as if God is an existing force that the spiritual animate in their private psychological universe.

My premise with this book is that the grandiose have been disempowered to the point that they were forced to create a fantasy structure by which they get what they need for emotional survival. This allowance of a sometimes subtle fantasy is an unconscious mechanism that allows their Ego to function as well as it does. I use the Freudian sense of Ego, that is, the part in us that when healthy solves problems and controls the relationship between our Superego and our Id. Their delusion or fantasy serves to float them over the jagged edges of reality so they do not get emotionally or psychologically hurt. If they were consistently hurt without getting help from this grandiose defense, they would not have the energy to go on living.

A painter, who says to himself that he is the best, most likely if he put his energy into realistic career advancement, would sell much less than many other local painters, and probably not have the great posthumous fanfare that awaits him. Perhaps at an unconscious level, the painter knows very well that if he tried to market his work, he would only have limited success, and not sell as many copies as he assumes. If an author, who only had the skills to write in an unpolished, stream-of-consciousness style, could competently market his work, his audience would probably be less than those who write in clear, eloquent styles. By creating a fantasy structure and splitting the world strongly into good (their style) and bad (the world's acceptance of style), they are safe from any failure or threat to their self-esteem. Inactivity then becomes a safety mechanism for deep psychological protection.

Some have used the term grandiosity to refer to the powerful that rule nations and have such hubris that they are willing to create negative conditions rather than to live humbly. Instead of seeing grandiosity as only happening to those who are powerful, we should especially see it as happening to those who are disempowered. For the disempowered, delusional grandiosity is a defense mechanism to allow them to avoid aspects of their life they cannot emotionally deal with.

The grandiosity that happens to the artistic and spiritual can be understood outside of the deep crevices of doctoral-level psychology because it is an insight we all have a stake in. Grandiosity happens in various ways to many people, not just a few. Understanding grandiosity in religious life can in fact be an instrument in examining how most of us can be more spiritual. The problem is that most people do not understand what grandiosity is. Grandiosity is seen as a type of pride, but pride has a conscious manifestation whereas grandiosity is more unconscious.

A form of grandiosity is at the heart of sectarian religious or political divisions that lead to violence. There is usually not a blind pride that leads people to violence, but instead a violation of various aspects of their worldview in which they feel they must defend themselves or even attack others. They become blinded to the outcome of their violent stances, and blinded to the historical results of intolerance and lack of compromise. If people intimately knew that simply believing in war as a solution might lead to the death of themselves or loved ones, that their sons and daughters will die in war, their cities will be destroyed, they might have the conscious insight to avoid war. Likewise, if the grandiose knew what they lost by being grandiose, they could find the help they need to overcome their grandiosity.

People do not often examine the idea of pride or vanity in an analytic way, however psychologists do examine grandiosity in a logical -- some would even say scientific -- way. Vanity should be separated from self-esteem. One person may take ten minutes a day for grooming while another a half-hour a day, but the latter is not necessarily vain. They may attach their career position to being attractive so good grooming becomes a type of economic necessity. Some of the grandiose may take a certain degree of pride in the fact that they only spend limited time grooming themselves. They will have grandiose delusions about their worth over others because they can only ascribe useless vanity to what others are doing. They do not allow themselves the good habits that others do.

Hence, the understanding of what grandiosity is must be built up in such person to avoid such delusions.

There are many different backgrounds and intelligences among people, thus there are different degrees of empowerment they can achieve. Over time, a functional person understands what are the most empowering conditions for their psyche and tries to stay within those limits. Prosperity of various kinds can develop when one is "right sized" -- when one is willing to fit in a place that is proper and best for one. Such a person does the work that he or she is most capable of. They endorse themselves internally so they are emotionally capable of doing work that requires the highest competence that they can comfortably achieve. The opposite is someone who is unwilling to work where work needs to be done. They may be intelligent but only be willing to do a very simple job, because of an emotional and not intellectual problem.

The goal of the wise is to enter the realm of the unconscious and to fix it so it does not hinder the realm of the conscious. If the psyche of the person is too frail, due to a lack of Ego strength and a comfortable and readily accessible identity, he or she may develop grandiosity to avoid real exposure to his or her shortcomings. The only way to get over grandiosity is to first get recognition of its roots in the unconscious and then understand why one is using it as a coping mechanism. One can then see the many instances of conscious grandiosity as are available to one's level of insight. One sees that no one is coming to one's rescue in these areas and, if one does not do things for oneself, nothing will get done.

The liberation of the spiritual and the artistic from their grandiosity will liberate more of their force from the places society tends to limit it. If the spiritual and artistic are empowered, they will bring more healing to the world. As they are now, many are very disempowered people, people without a voice. Grandiosity for them has become an embedded excuse to not walk up the necessary ladder it takes to activate their spirituality in a social context or establish their artwork professionally. When they can stop the "grandiose speak," when they can see through their false self and build their real self, they can stop making excuses and feel more at ease doing what they truly aspire towards.

Upon researching grandiosity I discovered that the word covers a lot of ground in the psychological literature. Of the two book length manuscripts that deal with this topic, one comes from a classic psychoanalytic approach and the other comes from one that is steeped in Jungian thought, mythology, and

comparative religion. My approach is that most of us by now are comfortable with the idea that religion is not something that is seen as threatened by psychotherapy. The precision of language in psychological studies should be upheld or else it is impossible to have intelligent cross-disciplinary work.

The problem about mentioning God when writing a book for both psychologists and those who only consider themselves interested in spiritual subjects is that some rigid psychologists might have a negative reaction to using the word "God." It is used here in discussing coaching a person to a positive relationship to the God idea. I am using an existential phrasing here, describing an inner experience which represents experiences with a force which may or not objectively be God. One can understand these passages as attempts to create a book where the existence of God is present without a need to be proven or disproven. The writing describes how to have a more functional experience in the relationship with God.

This writing uses the combination of psychology, philosophy, and theology. It is therefore not only religious writing, even though it deals with God as a present and real object in the lives of believers. It is different than most religious writing because such writing often comes from a certain denominational thinking without much credence to creating interfaith works based on techniques of philosophy or the scientific method of Western psychology. Academic theology is often a very abstract subject that does not seem to hold much interest in people outside of those in religious universities or institutions, but I use the term "theology" when I want to get away from the subjective nature of the word "spirituality."

I do not write from the sole perspective of any one religion in particular. Since all religions use quotes from the Bible at times, much like how many non-native English speakers use English as a common language, I use the Bible in this sense as an interfaith book that they share in common.

Those who are psychologically balanced but still have low self-esteem, may need to see grandiosity manifested in order for it to be an available inflation mechanism for their diminished self-esteem. This is similar to how alcoholics are often supported in their disease by alcoholic peers early in life. In this way, some types of grandiosity may be "contagious," in the way that those in destructive cults have similar distorted views of the world which they share with each other and which in turn bolsters their own problems. By becoming close to the grandiose and being exposed to their views of the world, a person whose

personality is often “submerged” or passive to others, is by nature of socialization accustomed to acquiescing to the grandiose or they may in fact lose the bond of friendship. Some views of the world that can be called grandiose are a constant critical view of the capacities of those that have normal empowerment, especially those in positions of power. It can be oriented towards those who judge what is valid in art, or what is spiritual, and so on. How skewed a person becomes is based on his or her overall level of reality testing. Reality testing is a term used in psychology quite often to describe the perception and cognition of truth. This subject gets complicated by going against religious statements that the world is a fallen place, or even truisms that great artists must work against the conformity of accepted styles.

I am fond of using what is known as the “literary fragment” form. Basically, this is the style of writing in short numbered statements, instead of trying to create a systematic flow in a large body of text. The fragment form is used in religious writings dating to 500 BC or earlier. Much of modern thought tries to create systems. Other authors react to these systems that seem to assume that the author knows everything there is to know about the subject. In my books, I am trying to share my experience with the subject without trying to limit the reader’s perspective. Therefore, I sometimes use numbered statements, which allow readers to draw their own conclusions instead of stringing them along in what may seem like a conclusion. In the fragment form, on rare occasions, there is a redundancy of what has been said previously in order for the current fragment to be complete. I have only numbered the fragments in longer chapters or chapters which had less of a natural internal structure.

## 1. What is Grandiosity?

If grandiosity was a conscious choice, one could say it was a moral problem. Grandiosity is not like conscious pride because grandiosity can be a type of blindness. It is not a conscious act, but more like the coping mechanism of an unbalanced person. That is why it is considered a problem in psychology, not in morality. Serious grandiosity can only be overcome with skilled help.

Grandiosity is a term used by psychologists to describe exact concepts in a diagnosis. There is also something called “infantile grandiosity” which as discussed by psychologists is a stage of development we all go through as children. Some do not successfully mature through this stage and may develop

narcissistic disorders. By grandiosity, I am not referring to *delusions of grandeur* which are more related to serious mental illness. A person who seriously thinks he is the Messiah is an example of a delusion of grandeur.

Grandiosity is a term common in addiction and recovery literature. Grandiosity in alcoholism relates to how an alcoholic may be in denial about his problem, perhaps thinking he has a special privilege to be able to drink alcohol many times a day, and has the special ability to drive drunk. Such people believe heavy drinking does not negatively affect them personally. In recovery literature, grandiosity refers to the sense of being owed a certain privilege from society, such as being entitled to have others pay one's way through life, that others allow them to be often intoxicated, and so on.

Recovering from serious grandiose thinking will take a dedicated effort of the person affected by it. Therefore, one should immediately present the benefits of recovering from grandiosity to the person. Some unfortunate grandiose people will never be able to escape their grandiosity. Like those prone to hallucinations, and who get an illusory benefit from having them, grandiosity gives people an illusory help, like a type of coping mechanism to compensate for unconscious feelings of inferiority. When one begins to see that grandiosity is not helping one get one's true needs met, he or she may then see the superior benefit of getting the needs actually met. One may then want to do the work necessary to overcome grandiosity.

There are some especially important points to make about grandiosity. One is that grandiosity can creep into lives that seem psychologically adjusted. Grandiosity in mild forms can make someone a bad business person, give one an inability to do adequate housekeeping, ruin a marriage by feelings of superiority over one's spouse, allow frequent drinking excesses by believing one is not changed when drinking, and so on. Knowing about grandiosity can help lessen the "contagious" aspect of grandiosity, which can be seen as the excuse-making nature that grandiosity gives to a person and which others may imitate because it seems like an easy way out of the difficulties of life.

It must be made clear what is the difference between the use of "ego" in spiritual literature and the use of "Ego" in Western psychology, and how they can be mutually beneficial. In Western psychology, the Ego is not "the self" but instead is a more internal part of our psyche that helps us function in life. The distinction between "the self" and "the Ego" gets very complex and is best discussed at depth in other books. The most important difference is that, in

psychology, the Ego is a positive thing, whereas in spiritual literature it is redefined as a negative thing. Everything that is not identified as a defect of character can be seen as being benefited by a functional Ego. When the behavior becomes a harm to oneself or others, it can be seen as being of the negative ego spoken of in spiritual books. The behavior can then be defined as a character defect. The thinking behind this definition is that it is spiritual to have the functional Ego of psychology that enables us to take care of our needs and not make us a burden to others. The fact that spiritual people sometimes lose the full and necessary capacity of their functional Ego is something that my books on religious psychology address (Pearson, 2005). Mature spiritual authors often speak from a perspective of the reader having the functional Ego, but because of the confusion of the two areas of ego/Ego, people can misunderstand what is being said. The lowercase ego is that which cannot fully function in accordance to the common good or one's own welfare, and eventually becomes a burden or offense to others.

In Western psychology, the Ego represents the part of our minds that is not really our "self" but instead is our functionality on a more internal level. Psychological theorists have created two different schools of psychology called Ego Psychology and Self Psychology to differentiate the importance of focusing on each area. What has happened since these two schools is that subsequent theorists have taken the best of both schools and incorporated them, building up new helpful definitions and therapies.

The functional Ego is involved in problem solving. While a person is growing up, if things go wrong in the formation of the functional Ego, it creates deep-seated conflicts and problems, which are not only in the conscious but also in the unconscious. People may consciously want to do something, but they are unable to do it because there is unconscious resistance to the achievement of what they want. There may be further problems created by what are called "Ego defenses" (Laughlin, 1970). This Ego is of course in no way related the use of the word "ego" by many spiritual authors. In their usage, the ego is anything *except* good at problem solving. This little "ego" is the term used to describe the whole self that will not give up harmful thinking or actions.

Given the different uses of the term "ego", it is important to understand what the popular expression "surrendering the ego" means in spiritual literature and how it can relate to psychological health. Many books that discuss spiritual matters spend time on this subject. Surrendering the ego can be described in many ways, but it always means giving up the smaller for the greater.

Surrendering the ego means a person has the ability to stop believing in certain capacities of his or her own understanding and becomes able to follow a better set of principles and practices. It is the idea of turning the outcomes of actions over to the will of God, or “natural law,” which can mean being humble and getting one’s due. One realizes that since all people have their own needs, sometimes in a complex society one’s own will cannot be achieved. In this way, one surrenders to the rules for outcomes that go beyond just what one desires for oneself. Therefore, in this book, the focus is not on spiritual surrender, which is described well in many books, but in the areas where one must be functional to be of use to oneself and others. There is no escaping the need to be functional in these ways.

When one's self-esteem no longer falsely resides in one's grandiosity, one can feel and enjoy a healthy self-esteem and all the benefits that come from it. The best things in life can come to a grandiose person from this healing because he finally understands his vital relationship to others, and becomes freer in time and energy. Will power increases due to the fact that one is not compulsively serving grandiose delusions. Some of these delusions may be very subtle as to why they are bad for the person, but if one looks at the economy of thinking involved, that is, how much mental time is spent processing these ideas, one can see the damage done.

A person who understands the capacities of the true self will understand the capacities of others. Areas of interpersonal power and responsibility are especially important. Studies of power are of interest here because in the past the discussion of power was a social, even academic, taboo. Power was something taken for granted, but never exposed, questioned or verbalized.

Many times people just assumed that those who were more powerful got that way because it was God’s will. This has a certain fatalism to it; to some it might mean that the evil present on Earth is pre-ordained. The powerful make most of the important decisions on earth, not the weak. If it is God alone who has put them in their places, this means, to some, that everything is the way it is on earth because it is God’s will. This exposes an interesting subject matter in the study of grandiosity and spirituality: whether each of us truly has free will to make vital decisions in our life, given a good political climate around us. This is important because the grandiose who are interested in spirituality often believe that they are in a certain condition because of divine will. No matter what befalls them, they “religionize” all situations to make them fit into their worldview, a worldview which states that they are always correct and in the right in some

way. This concept of the false “religionization” of events is important in understanding the hyperreligious. It means re-interpreting an event in a personalized fashion that can color any event in religious significance. Sometimes, it can be a very dysfunctional religious conception. If the artistic grandiose are not prone to religionization of events, they may complain about the injustice of the art world and how many of the great were only recognized after their death.

The study of the need for interpersonal power can accidentally make a person more grandiose, not less. When grandiose people understand the basic facts of their problem, they may think that by becoming more powerful in everyday life, they will get out of their problem. What may happen is that they merely inflate their previous worldview, perhaps becoming more introverted, less friendly, and less socially tactful. They must learn to see they are unable to help themselves in some ways and they must develop an emotional vulnerability to others based on their own needs. Some of these needs relate to how they allow themselves states of mastery or pleasure (Masterson, 1985). Other needs relate to how they allow others to become more intimate with them. This is why self-help groups are of importance because they foster relationships with others and even reliance when one is especially stressed.

By its very roots, “grandiosity” includes the word “grand” meaning large. It may seem too simplistic, but the healed in one sense becomes “smaller,” that is, finds an appropriate size so they can fit into their right social and internal places. This sense of smaller does not have any qualitative aspect to it. In no way are they less than their potential. By internal, I mean taking those positions that are right for them, such as the need to be good financially in order to not be a burden to others, do adequate housekeeping, and so on. Those who are prone to spirituality may be lucky here because spirituality has good ways of addressing grandiosity when it addresses problems of pride and of being useful to others. Alternatively, they may be unlucky because religious beliefs can have an exclusive aspect to them in which others are sometimes judged as inconsequential and contaminating if they do not hold similar beliefs.

The grandiose need to see how their grandiosity is an extremely poor social decision. A grandiose stance severely limits the amount of interpersonal esteem and empowerment they have among psychologically healthy people. If they are an artist or an entrepreneur, it cuts them off from normal avenues in which they could market their work.

The concepts of the real self and the false self are good tools to help establish reality testing in the grandiose. The false self can be understood by a simple illustration regarding people who are squeamish. Some people get very uncomfortable -- even experience pain and anxiety -- when certain subjects are discussed or displayed. For instance, when they see a surgical operation performed on television, they may be able to only stand a few seconds of it. They experience witnessing these subject matters as if they were immediately happening to them. Their reality testing is completely off in this regard. They are living as if the imagination triggered by the sensory impulse of sight is in fact reality for their physical body. Their *false self* experiences this psychologically imbalanced condition of squeamishness, which can even be elevated to hysteria. A proper reality testing of this situation is that nothing physically bad is happening to them. Their real physical body is safely protected from harm, but this fact is obscured by the false self. Their false self cannot determine what is reality. It cannot say, "I am safe and not being operated on. The person on this television show is." The false self is treated and diminished by psychotherapy that allows the real self to be built up and increased.

Some patterns of thinking in grandiosity are structured on ideas that are not often spoken about in polite society. For instance, we may need to think big to motivate ourselves. We may need to imagine our conquests and visualize our triumphs. However, vocalizations of one's healthy aspirations are often well hidden, and it is thought that it is not required to discuss them. The more a grandiose person reveals his imagined victories, the more he unknowingly buries himself in social obscurity. There are some grandiose people that talk about their grandiosity openly while others who keep it more hidden. People who display it may forget that, in society, one may feel a certain way about one's skills but it is usually only carefully spoken about. Society has a type of pecking order of power, in which already empowered people vocalize or otherwise demonstrate their abilities whereas disempowered people are not expected to.

To be able to study grandiosity and overcome it, it must be understood that not all adult behavior that seems like grandiosity is a fault or character defect. There is a saying that goes something like: "If we will not be for ourselves, who will be?" One must have enlightened self-interest. One has to skillfully integrate self in the environment, not seek to enable the self over the environment. Only integration is possible, or tolerated, by society. It is hard for some to understand what is a good pride, a type of pride that could help them manage life and their troublesome thoughts better. In Western psychology, it is known that for children, narcissism and grandiosity are important stages for

their self-worth. There are better words than “grandiose” for the good traits that evolve in geniuses who do something of value outside of their time’s immediate conditioning. Less sophisticated thinkers may unfortunately only understand this characteristic of genius in crude ways that become grandiose thinking. Grandiosity by its definition exalts personalized needs and reasons over the reasoning of society and logical reality testing, which in fact is the exact opposite of genius. This backward thinking is why the grandiose are often failures at achieving a high level of professionalism in any career. Clearly, there are many types of dysfunctional grandiose people, based on other factors such as extroversion and introversion. There are very successful people who do have types of grandiosity in certain areas but not in others. If we can define grandiosity as always negative, we can devise better words or phrases to define states of genius that are higher than society’s norms in some areas.

If one wants to think of a “good grandiosity,” one might do better studying ideas of Maslovian self-actualization or Jungian individuation, which are established theories of optimized, psychologically healthy individuals. Reading proverbial wisdom from great thinkers about the nature of genius and other exceptional human traits can be wiser than trying to establish personal ideas of what a great person is, as the grandiose attempts to achieve.

Grandiosity in spirituality can be observed when people believe that they have a right to be very influential over others. There are often passages in religious scripture that promote the idea of evangelizing. Latent grandiosity may be encouraged by reading such statements. The grandiosity that happens in spiritual circles uses the same kind of “splitting” as in artistic ones. Splitting is a psychological concept describing how some tend to see others as all good or all bad but never a mixture of good and bad. Grandiose religious people with a fundamentalist view separate beliefs and teachings into good for all, and bad for all. They have a false sense of omniscience in believing they understand what God desires all must believe and what methods of spiritual practice are universal for all cultures and backgrounds. This comes from not just their absolute belief in a text, but in a certain set of teachers’ interpretation of a text. They have a need to exaggerate their sense of importance, which may develop from a need to not assess their virtue in a realistic way. They may have had conditioning early in life which punished them for not living up to certain imaginary and obsessional standards, hence they are not able to see their real level of virtue. Their level of virtue may even be above standard levels, but because of an early hard religious upbringing, they may believe even being a little above the standard level is not sufficient.

The idea of working through issues with mental health therapists is not appreciated by some. It is absolutely resisted by many that have agendas of religious cults or believe a pharmaceutical solution is all that is needed. Some parents refuse to take any responsibility for causing environmental stresses to the child who exhibits symptoms, and think that issues can only be overcome by taking a medication. Some followers of alternative health ideas will not take pharmaceutical medications because of certain health beliefs, and they lump together psychoanalytic or other types of Western psychotherapy with psychiatry. Others, with mystical ideas, do not even see when there is a life-disabling problem, especially in these vague areas of empowerment. For them, false humility becomes a blanket excuse instead of a virtue. It is easy in the modern world to find comrades who share whatever belief one wants to support, however this often does not make one much better.

There are people who struggle to create value in the arts or by spiritual practice and do not seem to be rewarded by professional careers in the arts or holding positions of spiritual authority. But one is not *rewarded* by being given a professional career, one must *create* such a career. The old myth that the great artist is discovered by the generous patron is usually very disempowering.

We can look at two types of grandiosity, the kind in which a person never achieves high professional status, and one in which a person does achieve high status and develops a type of hubris that comes from elevated standing. Just as the type of grandiosity depends on whether someone is professionally competent or not, some grandiose people need to realize *their work is better than what they honestly believe it is*. In one part of the psyche, in the unconscious, a grandiose person may still not believe it is good. The later chapter on overcoming ambivalence covers this problem.

A persistently negative view of oneself often actually requires a person to create a covert inflated view. In such a case, it is grandiose because the person believes that her negative appraisal of herself is valid and society's positive appraisal of her is invalid. Hence, the grandiose person supercedes her own view over society's. Because of trauma, her sense of self is injured, but society may not see this, and so ascribes to her characteristics that she herself cannot uphold for herself. In this sense, it becomes grandiose to see oneself as damaged in situations where society desires to see oneself as normal.

When one's self-esteem no longer resides in one's grandiosity, one can feel and enjoy real self-esteem and all the benefits that come from it. Basically, everything good comes from the healing of grandiosity, because one's mind is free from distorted ideas about oneself and the world. One is also free from the time and effort the grandiose delusions caused one. Previously, the mind was operating under false premises, creating damaging defenses that did need to be created.

Although there is a slight relationship between grandiosity and pride, pride is not a term often used in psychological literature. Grandiosity is more often seen as a psychological term, an unconscious symptom of mental illness, whereas pride is considered a conscious trait that perhaps was influenced by one's upbringing. There is a good and a bad pride, whereas there is only a bad grandiosity. Even Jesus seemed to condone a good pride when he said "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet" (Matthew 7:6). Contrary to concepts about meekness, Jesus also often insulted the Pharisees, so he was not without a type of pride in what he saw as spiritual and his ability to make spiritual judgements about others.

While it is not usual to consider pride as a subject in psychology, one comes across the term "arrogance" discussed when reading about obsessive traits and narcissism. One perceives the atoms of thoughts that make up the idea of good pride discussed in psychology when the topic of cure in psychotherapy is described. Otto Kernberg said in a lecture called, "The Almost Untreatable Narcissistic Patient," that psychological healing in narcissism comes about in the tolerance of aggression and envy, the acceptance of what one receives, and in gratitude (Kernberg, 2007). One can see the dawning of a good type of pride in this healing, that others know as self-esteem, and some call without any problems "pride." But, to many drawn to spirituality and the reading of religious authors, all forms of self-esteem are considered sinful and dangerous. The difference lies in the fact that many spiritual people accept an inability to make it on their own without divine help. Jesus is said to have prayed for hours on at least on one occasion in the Gospels. He did not think that he did not need to pray. All great religious leaders know of a need for prayer, whereas the spiritually grandiose have a feeling of entitlement.

It is interesting to try to apply philosophical logic to the topic of pride, and it would be an interesting study to see where arrogance is discussed in psychological, sociological, and anthropological literature. One can remove the

theological and metaphysical dimension and still see reckless pride or hubris as a very destructive force. Even atheists know this and can comment on it. Pride is involved in the fall of many in positions of political leadership. This kind of pride can also be considered grandiosity. Such grandiosity is often involved in sexual indiscretions. Those who do not have mature sexual identities and bonding competence, who have not learned to keep sexuality in the confines of their committed relationships, often experience problems.

Grandiosity in the spiritual life is an important thing for which to seek healing. It is a dangerous flaw to have because the pride of grandiosity does not allow into oneself the goodness of others, or, in a religious context, does not allow in the goodness of God. This mindset unconsciously may cause one to falsely accuse other people of traits they do not have, or sins they have not committed. Grandiose people cannot pray for what they actually need because their self-esteem is falsely inflated. The blind need for arrogant pride always separates us, so that as a people or a group we are not unified, but become divisive. To some people, such a concept of being agreeable and at ease with others, in some sense being equals with them, is frightening and resisted. These people might at least realize that if people are not unified in some respect, there would be no such thing as charities, churches, or any other beneficial grouping of people that exists outside of governmental agencies.

It is said in the Bible that it was pride that transformed the angels into demons. Many of the spiritual who are truly ethical do not have the grandiosity that they are better than other people. They might have the view that they are normal people who are drawn towards spirituality by the grace of God. Often, people who are considered very spiritual do not see themselves as better than people who are not drawn to spiritual things because they accept the insight, "there but for the grace of God go I." If one does not have a worldview where one makes such statements, one can at least understand the dangers of becoming an "island unto oneself" because of a prideful attitude.

Accepting that one is not extraordinarily spiritual helps one to have the humility that is widely recognized to be of great value. One problem in achieving this humility is the imagined need for a defense against future punishment, because punishment was received in the past for "being bad." That defense, in effect, states: "I cannot allow myself to let down this spiritual guard that I created or I will be punished. If I represent myself as very spiritual (to myself or others), I will not be punished." It is not the identification with spirituality that is wrong; it is the imagined need to see oneself as far greater in spirituality than others.

Such persons need to recognize they have this defense in order for it to go away. Most likely, upon frequently seeing it, it will look bad to them, and they may not feel the need for it any more. They may realize that there is no need to always fear punishment. They can then allow themselves the virtue of humility, which allows for greater functionality.

The more a person does in the world, the greater the risk that he or she will do something wrong, just by the greater frequency of events and the probability we all have at one time or another of error. When the grandiose follow through on their ideas and bring them to completion, which may mean marketing of some kind, they have a greater chance of doing something wrong and having this exposed to others. This may be unconsciously perceived as a greater chance of getting exposed to other's hostile behavior. The grandiose often enlarge public events or responsibilities beyond their normal proportion. One can see why the artistically grandiose may not want to become fully professional artists if they were previously abused and shamed. The religious grandiose may avoid professionalism because it may increase their chance of offending religious ideas by saying something wrong in their work or belief they may create evil in some other way. They do not realize that what they do in the world, like what most others do, will not expand to the huge proportion that their imagination tells them it will. This is due to the faulty "thinking" which allows their grandiosity in the first place. This fear can be overcome by recognizing that all our actions in the world are just one small part of the billions of actions that are being done daily by people.

A form of grandiosity can manifest as a lack of humility that prevents people from exercising adequately, eating properly, and generally doing what is best for them. Books have been written about why "smart people do dumb things" and newspapers are full of tales of the powerful who are exposed for their corruption and scandals. "Egotism" is a good word to describe these types of grandiose thinking and behaviors that we see in everyday life. Since this book leans on psychology, the word "egotism" must be omitted. Since the idea of humility is often considered a religious topic, it is hard to discuss it in a work using psychological principles. Psychologists do not often suggest that their narcissistic patients "be humble," but instead by talk therapy work on various issues. These may be issues such as finding examples of how they put too much responsibility on themselves, and the negative results of taking too many things on assumption. These insights can help a patient work through areas that were previously arrested in development.

There is a great practicality in humility that must somehow be gotten across to people not drawn to spiritual literature. It is interesting however that a global admonition to be humble is not always accurate for some people. Some people have been so beaten down that they should not seek to be "humble" towards some, but instead put up boundaries with them or even seek out a third-party mediated confrontation.

In traditional psychoanalysis, the state of grandiosity can come from "a severely damaged Ego structure and a failing self-esteem" (Salzman, 1975). These people are disempowered by a lack of Ego functions and therefore do not achieve the state of self-actualization. They have problems in their social identity. One might wonder what is the right definition of grandiosity, the one that empowered corporate executives and politicians can have (Moore, 2003), or the traditional psychoanalytic one, when in fact both are aspects of grandiosity but in two different types of people. It may be easy to see that grandiosity is something that happens to those who are mentally ill, but when one examines how much spiritual literature aims to fight against the power of "the ego," one can see that sometimes what looks like mental illness becomes an ontological choice. Because of a predisposition to take certain spiritual statements seriously, the strength of the Ego can be lessened and grandiosity may eventually become an outlet. This is totally different from the type of grandiosity that comes to a person who is already empowered enough to be a general of an army or a CEO. That both words are describing the same trait seems unfortunate, but perhaps this will not always be the case.

When grandiosity enters and stays in a life, many things can become built on an incorrect hypothesis. One does not necessarily have a delusion of grandeur, but one's volition is askew. One probably cannot proceed professionally very well. This is because one feeds the delusional system of magical thinking, a common part of which is an interrupted volition. What I mean by an interrupted volition is that a person lacks will because of his inadequate concepts about how tasks are to be brought to completion. The grandiose often assume that someone else should do a part of the work. It might not be a spoken attitude by them but instead a construct of the unconscious. Grandiosity helps one assume that one will be rescued by another, perhaps even discovered after one dies. This does not mean that the idea of having a value for another in the life of their work is wrong -- because non-grandiose people can have that value. Writers and other types of artists have agents and managers. Grandiosity may prevent someone from getting to that stage.

Grandiose people cannot fully accept reality when they are in their grandiosity. This is the "fear of sanity," or *mistrust of sanity*, which is the fear of painful exposure by being compared to the "sane." One fears sanity because one is in fear of what it will reveal about oneself. One stays skewed in order that one can stay hidden. One may have the fear of being seen as only average or what some falsely judge as "mediocre." This is similar to what Otto Kernberg said about the tolerance of envy being a sign of psychological healing (Kernberg, 2007). The working through of the non-tolerance of "envy" becomes the act of exposure to what a person's real needs are and perhaps the beginning of the fulfillment of these needs. In a spiritual context, one is allowed to want what others have because it is what the Creator wants for oneself.

There are finer gradations of what could be seen as a type of grandiosity that happens to people who form harsh criticisms about others who differ from them. One aspect of this more subtle type of grandiosity, and one that most empowered people overcome, is harsh judgement of those who do not believe in their philosophy or religion. An example of such is atheists who believe that all people who believe in God are simple minded. In no way can it be said that the great minds in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were solely atheist or believers in God. This is true even during the time during which the so-called death of God concept was popular. For instance, to cite music composers, those with strong religious faith include Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Messian, Poulenc, Part, Hovahness, and this does not even include Hindimith, Leonard Bernstein, Ralph Vaugh Williams, and Benjamin Britten, all composers of religious works. Among painters, we can include Salvador Dali, Kandinsky, Marc Chagall, Joseph Cornell, and even Andy Warhol. These cover artists with a Judeo-Christian leaning. There are of course many more who have taken an Eastern Religious perspective, which often mirrors many of the same themes and motivations as Judeo-Christian religious thinking. Debussy and Satie held strong spiritual beliefs, with Satie's figuring strongly on Christ, and taking on a mystical orientation. It should be noted that the names mentioned are among the most important and innovative in their time. The same could be said for literary authors, many of the most important ones have made positive statements about religion, including Borges and T.S. Elliot. For more evidence of this, we can see one of the founders of the Dada art movement, Hugo Ball, became a devoted Christian mystic. Another founder of Dada, Tristan Tzara on a few occasions mentions God and prayer in his poetry. Of course, those who stereotype modern artists in general do not realize that there can be a depth of insight into the reality of the religious perspective without any of the sentimentality or dogma often associated with it.

If we look at the importance of sexuality, then grandiosity will have some relationship to it, since it is at the core of a large percentage of human experience. The grandiose will project their grandiose tendencies in their romantic relationships or ideals. When psychologists talk about sexuality, they do not usually mean the act of sex, they are referring to gender issues, what it means to be a man or woman, and what happens during the maturation to becoming a man or a woman. Most of us see the romantic relationship to be one of the most important bonds in life. How men and women interact must not have grandiosity in it, or one's sexuality becomes distorted. Excessive use of pornography, fantasy, and masturbation can be looked at as one way that grandiosity manifests in the area of sexuality. The idea of a person only being suited for a "pornographic ideal" shows one way how one is not showing proper reality testing. This can manifest in how older people think that they are an adequate romantic partner for much younger people. Some of the grandiose believe that they are entitled to a young, beautiful and hardly-aged partner because they believe that they themselves do not age as other people.

Perhaps the grandiose picked up the habit of not fully listening to authorities because once there was an authority in their life that was in fact saying something that was not true. An example could be a parent saying that painters are all decadent, that the child could never be smart enough to be a doctor, and so on.

## 10. Conspiracy Theory and the Mistrust of Prosperity

Conspiracy theorists have a type of grandiosity in ongoing operation. Among conspiracy theorists, there is a belief that one has the ability to really see into the nature of things, to pull out obscure facts that most people recognize as being totally improbable. I'm not denying that there are powerful and negative forces that act against the greater good, but these are usually not hidden or mysterious.

There is a tremendous energy that believing strange conspiracies about the powerful gives one. People are not born conspiracy theorists but they can get the habit from other conspiracy theorists. Believing conspiracy theories with others is a type of bonding ritual. Some locations seem more prone to create people who are conspiracy theorists. I noticed how several people in Long Island, New York were certain that the "Y2K bug," the computer programming situation that occurred when the year 2000 hit, was certain to bring down

civilization as we knew it. They seemed to have a need for making life exciting in this way. Perhaps, being born into upper middle class surroundings, or just the nature of living life in an international cosmopolitan center such as New York, they were expecting life or society at large to “entertain” them in this fashion by crumbling before their eyes. I remember how, about 20 years before, many of them were talking about the end of the world by a flood and similar types of cataclysms.

Conspiracy theorists may often do more harm than they realize. They demonize the rich and powerful in fanciful ways instead of trying to build a bridge between the rich and the rest of the world in the way a labor union builds a bridge between the owners and workers.

A "conspiracy theorist" archetype could be looked at as a type of repeating pattern in human beings in the same way as the King, Warrior, Magician, and Lover archetypes are in the collective unconscious. The conspiracy theorist archetype could be seen as an overwhelming zeitgeist that embodies much of the person's personality and outlook. The negative effect of conspiracy thinking is that it disallows positive social and economic activism and changes in people because they may unconsciously believe that they will get killed by the (most likely imaginary) conspiracy if they protest in rational ways. They may also unconsciously realize that the conspiracy they believe in actually has no way of existing and that it merely functions as a social bonding mechanism or have some other valuable function for them.

Misanthropic views of mankind are not indicative of good results on the spiritual and psychological path of empowerment. One is instead rewarded in life for destroying one's own loneliness as well as another's aloneness. People who have an honest liking of others are able to be part of the “movers and shakers” of the world, being real and engaging. Before, they may have been largely afraid of others, even though they may not have ever admitted it. Through authentic spiritual practice, they become convinced of the world's worth and develop a love for it. The outlook of those, such as conspiracy theorists, who villainize, for an example, everyone who works for the government, often has a misanthropic element and it tends to isolate them from many, except those who share similar conspiracy ideas. I do not mean “misanthropic” in that they consciously hate others, but only use it for lack of a better word. I mean a state that seeks a type of emotional compensation for being caused bitterness, hurt, or shame. It is the message of the major religions that this is a fallen world. It is as if conspiracy theorists are discovering this fact

for themselves for the first time, and believe it is the first time it has even been thought of in the world. This is how their unconscious might look at it, not their conscious understanding. They create their own Genesis story based on rich families, secret societies, and the like, to replace the mythologies of the world.

There are, of course, at any given time, some conspiracies in the world. Intelligence agencies by nature operate as a type of conspiracy although supposedly under accountability to their government. Political parties, and those that have a vested interest in such parties coming to power, operate at times in a conspiratorial manner. But these groupings of people are not the kinds of conspiracies that make good mysteries. For a conspiracy theory to have power, it has to have a sense of mystique, like the mystique surrounding the one-thousand year old person named "Saint Germain" who some people believe has found the secret of eternal physical life. If one is not pre-dispositioned to believe in one-thousand year old wandering mystics, one must amplify the intelligence and cunning of the wealthy families of the world, demonize racial groups or religious denominations, or strengthen the barriers between the average and the affluent. The political conspiracies that have been proven to exist compete for the immediate and very real political power there is to be had in the world. The types of conspiracies that become popular mystify human empowerment and give credence at some level to the myth of the Superman, such as various Illuminati conspiracy theories. Like the charge grandiosity gives by making oneself seem bigger than one is, conspiracy theories make society seem more mysterious than it is, and hence give life the same kind of charge that others may get from enjoying a good movie.

To combat the tendency to lose one's reason by believing in non-existent and fanciful conspiracies, one starts by deflating the toxic self-importance regarding how one views realities that one has no proof over. One has to realize what one has possibly lost, and what one continues to lose out on, by believing in non-existent conspiracies. One is essentially wishing away one's ability to do "reality testing." One has also to realize that there is always money to be made by people who sell books and seminars. There is often a cult of personality around the major conspiracy theorists who can attract followers. One may come to recognize people who say that they not only believe there in a particular conspiracy, but are in fact experts on it, as possible charlatans or merely self-deluded.

One interesting distinction between people can be called the ability to celebrate prosperity. Even if one does not have or want physical wealth, there is

an aspect of celebrating prosperity that is functionally important. By this I mean that one looks at how one accepts aspects of quality and how one can maintain a good existence or improve oneself by thinking about this. Some feel cut off from higher qualities of things and a similar spectrum in people, and constantly create further causes that further this problem in their life. This seems to be very much an unconscious process that people are unaware of. But by quality in people, I do not mean that it is spiritual or even civil to say one person is more valuable than another, only that one person makes higher quality choices in certain areas than another.

Many who have some kind of background in the Judeo-Christian religion think essentially that Jesus re-created the blessings of the Old Testament's God that were said to include those of prosperity. Not judging the prosperous is a strange type of spiritual work that many often do not seem to get right. Judging the prosperous may take one away from many artistic communities, who often are supported by the wealthy.

The love of quality is in a sense accepting the life force; it helps in a drive towards elevating the pleasure principle. Loving aspects of higher quality states of mind, or visiting a beautiful area of town can help ingrain in one a love of life. Accepting the highest level of skills and craft is not something unspiritual in itself. The reverse of this mindset can manifest as the death of appreciating things in life and not appreciating those who have achieved important things in life, like those that hold graduate degrees, composers of great music, or those who have a career in the arts. It can also manifest as the death of the hope of physical achievement, such as not having fitness or strength goals, or the lack of having order and organizational goals. Organized people get comfort out of this need of organization being filled in their life. They do not think it is negligible that their home is clean and orderly.

In studies of spirituality, we are taught to respect rich and poor, strong and weak. The idea of *quality* in people is looked down on by many of the spiritual, because it is much easier to do away with the idea that a virtuous person may have a certain higher quality to them than it is to think abstractly about religious statements that denounce attachment to worldly goods and preferential treatment to the rich. Some artists accept the student role far into their adult life because they have high respect for the idea of quality. There is a type of grandiose delusion some have about what an upper middle class person should be able to do with their standing in the world. People with this delusion believe that if they were in the upper middle class, they would use such standing

to significantly change the world. They may divorce themselves from embracing quality because they do not want to be associated with the failure of empowered people to change the world. They might see that it is most likely a delusion that they would significantly change the world if they were in the upper middle class. This might help them overcome the judgements against aspects of quality since they begin to differentiate aspects of quality from someone who may indeed have unethical behavior.

For a life of quality, we have to serve forces that enable us to deserve quality. Some of these things are partially economic. They are such things as holding a job, or if self-employed, not living by whims of what *might* make a profit, but being subordinate to real business wisdom and a real business plan. Some of them are not economic. Not being overly critical of others is important for a higher quality life. By this, I also mean understanding the right "size" of oneself in any social circumstance, and not being derogatory towards others.

Many emotionally healthy celebrate the concept of prosperity. They may imagine it for themselves. They try to attract it to themselves, and they try to be attractive and pleasing to the prosperous. They visit nice places on their vacation. Some people cannot embrace life as life is and become hateful of all things prosperous. One often sees this kind of thinking in addicts and alcoholics. Life has become too painful, even early life, and they medicate themselves with drugs and alcohol instead of getting such emotional rewards from normal achievements. Since life is painful, the competent and prosperous are seen to be to blame, since they are benefiting in life.

There is much occurrence in religious scriptures and in people interested in spiritual things of verbally villainizing the rich. However, linguistically there is little absolute ethical meaning in the terms "the rich" or "the poor" because there are different types of rich people and different types of poor people. In what sense are the rich similar? In what sense are the poor similar? Many career criminals are in fact often poor. Many rich people give to efforts to feed and shelter the homeless. To look at the psycholinguistics of this issue, since there is so much villainizing of the rich, a better term to use for those who are very concerned with ethics and are focused on growing in empowerment in these financial issues would be "prosperous." In fact, most people do not feel the need to aspire to great wealth; merely having work that they can love, health care, and adequate time for leisure is considered great wealth. Instead of the thinking and statements associated with words like "wealthy," "rich," and so on, which may have unconscious resistance, one can agree that prosperity is a healthy goal.

There are usually no negative connotations with the word "prosperous." On the other hand, it is often thought that having an enormous amount of money, the amount that makes one very "rich" or "wealthy" in most peoples' eyes, may become a huge burden.

Like the wealthy, some of the poor have better qualities and some have worse ones. Some of the poor are very moral and hard workers who just have limited financial intelligence and cannot understand the more complicated maneuvers required to earn more money in a complex society. Some of the poor are very intelligent, and may even have advanced degrees, but have interest and ambition in certain areas which year after year brings them little money. They are unable to keep a balance between their interests and the type of service to society that brings financial reward. In many instances, they may serve society greatly but in ways that provide little income.

In a perfect world, everyone would be well provided for from birth. That is what a sane civilized society aims to do. Everyone should be educated to the maximum of the ability to educate a person, within reason of that person's capability and desire. Everyone should have the highest health care. Who would argue against these things? With these ideas as a guiding principle, one may learn to think to be more prosperous is not necessarily unusual, but the way it should be for all. If the grandiose realize this, then they may not feel the prosperous are very different than them, or that it is too unusual to think that they themselves may also become prosperous one day.

Wealth is a very relative term. Someone who is prosperous to one person is barely making it to someone else. Some of the very disempowered demonize all of the prosperous. They create an image of the wealthy as anyone who has a basic middle-class income. There is obviously a false value being created, since they in fact make themselves the outcaste of almost all but the least fortunate financially. Having false values or no values, the disempowered cannot see real values and instead hold many ideas that counterfeit real values. They use their counterfeit values to fight against real values taking hold in themselves.

Some would argue that the wealthy are often the meritocracy, that is, they are the ones who have worked the smartest or the hardest. Some would argue they labor to make the world a better place. Some believe the wealthy are only warmongers. A historian with a behavioral psychology perspective may state that the structures that create war are ancient, and people unconsciously inherit them. The "military industrial complex" is real but when and in what land did a

type of it not exist? To state a theological view, many of the religious say fallen angels are essentially responsible for war on earth, and that the whole world leadership is under such fallen beings. They quote the Bible and say, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers, spiritual forces of evil in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). Regardless of what faction of people actually profit off war, the majority of the other wealthy are probably innocent of making any direct or indirect profit.

There are many types in art circles who lament all things wealthy. It is often a type of double standard in many ways since they are often the children of wealthy parents who drop out of the family social circle because of competitive family dynamics. This can be looked at as what competitive family dynamics have done to them while growing up, hence they avoid various aspects of what such social circles are like in the present. This can encourage an addict mindset, since normal avenues of experience may be denied them by their judgmental attitudes, they may develop a need to get their fulfillment from substance abuse.

One might say that rigorously judging the prosperous ultimately forces one to demonize quality. Such critical people may be denigrating excellence in the highest phases of culture and accomplishment. It is therefore a mask of a major type of disempowerment when some people are proud of how much they dislike prosperous people. It is actually the strangest conspiracy to imagine, and one that if it was true, has some practical value for some to believe in. That is, it is so negative for a person to use the prosperous as a scapegoat that it almost seems like a ploy to keep a limited amount of people empowered and prospering. The more people that hate the prosperous, the less competition there will be for prosperity.

The misplacement of the concept of quality is one reason why some cannot work on themselves or progress much in therapy. They cannot create an aim because they cannot imaginatively feel what it would be like if they were more competent. Since they may have been told not to want more money, not to want romance, not to *need anything*, they have little motivating hope. Of course, they can start with the small things in their lives, symbolically turning whatever lead they can find into gold. This can manifest in such things as how one keeps one's home to how well one appreciates others around them. I believe this will naturally lead to the discovery of the concept of human warmth -- a quality of emotional life that can be only called "warmth." Exploring warmth more will be a chief weapon against the need for grandiosity.

The Old Testament gives us no problem with valuing quality. But the New Testament is another story, because it tries to correct the problem when quality or prosperity becomes the only value. The Old Testament had that focus as well, but in the New Testament it became more prominent. It is interesting, however, that it is not the only focus, and even a cursory reading of the New Testament can enlighten people who only remember the self-sacrificial aspect of it.

One has to disenchant the disempowered from their fascination with poverty. The ethical rightness of an adequately virtuous person's prosperous life is an existentially experienced truth. For instance, celebrities who often volunteer for charities may also live in opulence. One does not have to be only one or the other. The obsessive spectrum in thinking that contains problems of grandiosity tends to see all things in black and white.

Some people live very comfortably with an idea of the need for force applied against the outside, the outside being other forces of society. They believe that this applied forcefulness enables and protects them. There is a whole "political" and "economic" system of protecting this applied forcefulness in oneself and one's family. Sometimes, it extends to protecting one's company, fraternal organization, sect, or other organized body of people, or even ideology. This is related to an idea that there is a certain competitiveness for everything in life, even if this competitiveness is not apparent to the person one is competing against. It is wise to understand this competitiveness, even though it is not always directly spoken about. It may be that some are competing and many are merely competed against, and do not fight back. The highly competitive people have a high self-preservation instinct. Others who are less competitive may have all kinds of positive characteristics -- even self-preservation. An ethical problem comes in when the competitive can no longer cease competing. There is a force of nature in human beings that can be stated as: "Once a person turns a force on, it is hard to turn it off." The age-old vice of greed is a name for this type of characteristic. Lust is sometimes also used to describe this kind of force in human nature, as in "lust for power." The need for power becomes more of a blind compulsion than a rational process, something that may kill its owner with medical problems like hypertension.

It is said in motivational literature that one must be willing to try every day no matter how many failures one perceives one has created. Loving aspects of quality and the desire to be around quality is one way of keeping this motivation. We can define quality as that which is cultivated and cared for -- not

solely that which is expensive. Since many people see some forms of the love of quality as countering the spiritual drive, it becomes impossible for some of the spiritually grandiose to become motivated for a higher standard of living. This also happens to artists or activists in their own way.

There are circumstances when a person is able to get by with very little. Voluntary simplicity is a noble goal. A community should never stigmatize those practicing it. People who are significantly underearning, however, may have their strong disadvantages, especially those who are parents. The grandiose can use their lack of income as a protective measure against emotional vulnerability. Because of all the experiences which have been denied them, the grandiose may need to grieve the lack of money they have had in their adult life, if they feel capable of facing up to this. They are not grieving the lack of money itself, but the exchange of energies that money helps allow. They should mainly grieve their own lack of vocational or business mastery, not that they were victimized.

It is argued by some that one can become more empowered by taking a more “conservative stance” in life. This is not always focused on a politically conservative stance but sometimes one in which one conserves one’s energy and attention towards taking care of oneself. Traditional spiritual values argue to create a balance. Most religious scriptures state strongly that one must take care of oneself and one’s responsibilities, and that an ill fate will happen to the lazy. The inability to conserve a good part of one’s energy and attention towards taking care of oneself can become what is known as codependence.

There may be valid reasons for a person to criticize a certain political party, but it is perhaps unfortunate that people demonize political parties like they do. In the United States, as in other countries, politicians of opposite parties are sometimes friends and guests at each others' houses. In cases like this, when they are at work, such politicians’ rivalry often seems like a show, a part in the play of forces to balance the liberal with the conservative. Some conspiracy theorists hold mainstream political parties as being part of the great conspiracy. When the opposing party is in office, those citizens who are conditioned to mistrust everything about the party they oppose might feel downtrodden and become inactive. They may not feel only personally downtrodden in mood, but are perhaps less active politically, unconsciously afraid that the evil party is in office and they will be hurt if they protest. In the same way, people must champion the good that occurs when opposing parties are in office. There is a tendency in some to neglect whatever good gains are done while certain parties

are in office, or in fact even by any party in government. Little insights like this help lessen the powerlessness that may enforce certain grandiosities.

The conservative has a certain attitude about their responsibilities and the responsibilities of others. They see this pattern as being built into the structure of creation, perhaps something God ordained. The conservative believes that those who do not have good self-discipline in life end up getting what they deserve, so they themselves toughen up and focus chiefly on their own lives and the lives of their families. It is usually a mystery to those who are called liberals how a spiritually-minded person may end up being conservative, but this attitude about responsibility is one reason why. A conservative may strongly believe that life is generally set-up to have a system of reward in this life, not just the next, and that it is their godly responsibility to prove the goodness of God in this life by their creating a prosperous life for themselves. This is why some people can consider themselves spiritual and attenuate more towards the conservative spectrum, whereas other spiritual people cannot see how anyone can consider themselves both spiritual and conservative at the same time. A liberal may be more interested in interrupting the normal cause and effect of a person's actions from affecting the person. This is often based on the liberal's own spiritual and social beliefs. The moderate can see the truth in either position, taking from each what they will, and therefore may be the least affected by the political grandiosity of extremism or the demonizing of one party over the other.

What we see by an existential display of the religious is that a simple faith in God – or a public confession of this faith -- and going to church does not help some religious people to grow in virtue or even be empowered economically. There has to be some method for such growth to occur. One of the main problems that is present in many people is their vagueness about this fact, and hence they easily fall into the traps that lure people into destructive cults or self-imposed non-spiritual limitations. Recently, one-half of a billion dollars was swindled from Christians in an investment scam. According to the North American Securities Administrators Association, in the three years before the first publication of this book, 1.8 billion dollars was scammed from people using religion as an affinity relationship. This may not include what happens to people in destructive cults, when the giving of the money is not considered "investing" but a donation.

Victimization from scams and other problems that can happen to some of the religious would be lessened if they put more effort into their reasoning ability. There is the biblical admonition to be "wise as serpents and as gentle as

doves” but also to “lean not on one’s own understanding.” This wisdom may not be able to happen if the religious are caught in social circles tied in with a certain unwise church circle or cult. They must then take a rest from reading only spiritual books in a literalist viewpoint, or believing in only what was preached from the pulpit to gain the clarity to avoid dangerous situations. It is often wondered why there are so many differing types of religious ideas on earth. A simplistic reason is that with each new branch of religion there are those who are the founders, and who therefore gain more power. They have a circle of people who are close to them and therefore these people have more power than others who are less close. New religious circles often do emphasize new, important areas, such as the Salvation Army, who brought religious concern further out of the church and onto the street. New religious circles also help bring a sense of community into smaller segments of people, instead of the anonymity that is sometimes felt in large church bodies. When one thinks one is in a questionable religious group, one might ask what of value is being created by it.

## 11. Conclusion

A question that has perplexed many throughout history is "How can a person be both empowered and spiritual at the same time?" Many had to separate a powerful person in society from a spiritual person or even a creative one. There are many good and intelligent people who do not see enough creativity or spirituality on earth to think differently. Such people may become tremendously disempowered and hence not give the world enough of their spirituality or creativity.

The deconstruction of grandiosity can help rid the world of much dysfunction. Those who understand it can educate others towards the elimination of the obsessive and ignorant drive to empower oneself by grandiosity that only hinders happiness and usefulness. This healing can declutter the spiritual and artistic soul of humanity. When anything is decluttered, it becomes optimized.

I have outlined some of the needs that the grandiose are not allowing themselves. To use a beautiful psychological phrase, “the early repudiation of the offending Ego-dystonic elements” so needed to be mentally healthy was not present in the grandiose, so the only source of energy became the distorted wish

fulfillment-type opinions of oneself that can only take place in isolation. When one does not have to appease the grandiosity, one can make and fulfill constructive goals that accomplish one's needs and hopes. People can remove aspects of grandiosity so they do not substitute unreal things for real things. It is a common but not often discussed trait in the psychologically healthy to dismiss grandiose-type thoughts or options.

In the same way as the artistic, the spiritual are often concerned with hard-to-measure qualities. How do we know how influential any one person actually is? Are not altruistic people sometimes repaid with ingratitude? How can a logical yet limited mind truly measure the results of someone's prayer on others? Although secular psychology cannot touch these subjects, nevertheless they form a part of possible truth and in any book concerned with a logical examination of life, one must at least display possibilities. There is a difference in displaying possibilities in one's writings and leading the reader to a direct conclusion.

The loss of the positive connection to self traps one into grandiose problems. Being aware of what is of value to one's true self allows one to take care of real needs, achieve one's goals, and experience real happiness. One creates honest self-endorsement more frequently and continuously recognizes the fulfillment of goals when they occur. One learns to be gentle with oneself, or exert exacting self-discipline if that is more necessary for one's overall benefit.

Perhaps motivating factors in religion are done for the results leading up to them, even though potentially they themselves may represent something that does not fully exist. For example, eternal damnation in Christianity motivates some to do good, others to just go to church. In esotericism, the promise of hearing heavenly beings or having magical powers motivate some by acts of yoga and meditation to keep their mind and body in good shape. When one no longer believes the original motivating factor there may be a problem with motivation.

An image of a God who does not want certain people to have enough money or romance is often seen as being a true interpretation of God, but it is probably a God that most empowered people would say is not worth having. Healthy people want to be seen as more incorruptible than this, and do not like to have a fear of being corrupted by what some people assume may take their attention off spiritual things. One concept of corruption they work against is the belief that God keeps a person's good away from him or her. That could easily

be called “demonic.” Satan means “the accuser” in Hebrew, in this case, it is accusing God of withholding good things from people. The world is filled with such beliefs and attitudes about spiritual matters. These false beliefs and attitudes make certain people create demonic acts, which even the religious, especially in modern cults, are often exposed as creating. The theological idea remains that God may have reasons beyond our understanding, but these reasons are not ultimately beyond the common person’s understanding of good and evil, right and wrong.

Like obesity, the amount of grandiosity may raise and fall in any given society. It is possible that more and more talented people will become aware of grandiosity as an inadequate way to live. It is improbable and even humorous to imagine a public information message on the dangers of grandiosity, even though a higher quality of life is denied the grandiose, since they cannot achieve the direct channel of will because of self-defeating reasoning.

Unlike the grandiose may believe, it is not in becoming evil that people overcome the results of grandiosity. However, it may be by working through the false ideas of good that they had about themselves and examining the harmless aspects of what they called evil in the past. How else can a poisonous Superego work except in terms of good and evil? The grandiose may have judged innocent empowered people because they falsely saw them as evil. The path of growth in some people's lives is to accept the betrayal of their good that certain forms of religion caused in them because they were people of a specific capacity and disability. The solution is in part overcoming their old idea of the scrupulous good.

Those prone to grandiosity should understand that they can be gentle with themselves and work through their problems because grandiosity is like any other mental delusion or dysfunction. They do not have to be a super-person in order to take full part in life. Hopefully, by this book, I can show that it is one of the most disabling problems of the gifted. The grandiose should not be ashamed it is their shortcoming as grandiosity is a type of coping mechanism. Somehow – some may call it a chemical imbalance and some may call it a dysfunctional upbringing -- they are not able to achieve fulfillment in a normal life. They may be noble and want to volunteer themselves to something they saw as helping the weak, the poor, or the victimized. Yet, in their surroundings, others may have considered them as the weak, the poor, and the victimized. They may have learned to depend on this as an excuse while still maintaining the imaginary fulfillment of their grandiosity. They may have set up a platform in

their thinking that because of their greatness they cannot do other things. This may be a delusional understanding, such as, "I cannot be married because of my need to help the weak, so I will not try," and so on. My point is not that there are not noble people who chose singleness to more easily help others. My point is that it is human nature to use this as an excuse for grandiose self-inflating reasons.

There is a need to know how to differentiate grandiosity from authentic genius. When are authentic geniuses not grandiose when they highly value their gifts? This is probably a difficult quandary for geniuses that have disempowering traits. How do they see their proper place in the world? A person does not have to be a genius to recognize valuable talents that are greater than the average, and therefore could establish him or her in a rewarding professional career. But when one holds a grandiose value about one's talents, one may never establish oneself in the world because one cannot see that one is only possibly slightly or moderately above average, not a historical figure who deserves a high place in society.

The negative parts of life that the empowered have avoided still haunts and hurts many. These people may become envious that the empowered are no longer affected by what troubles them. The empowered must always recognize this to be able to understand people's reactions to them. The disempowered must understand it is okay to be around successful people, instead of only having the grandiose idea that they can change all who are less empowered than they. The grandiose's responsibility is accepting their natural love and acceptance of others. This is their psychological and spiritual exercise. This is their highest practice of virtue where they cannot fall or degrade themselves. It is the opposite of the unconscious self-defeatism that earmarks grandiosity.

There may not be enough concern among spiritual authors and leaders about the complex interaction of self-esteem and humility. This is an intricate topic, because spiritual teaching that aims at humbling destructively prideful people is not always needed for people who have low self-esteem. On the spectrum of people and God, the spiritual believe all must humble themselves. Self-esteem does not work against humility in many. However, in some, self-esteem is the only condition they consistently hold as being essential. These people often abuse the power they are able to manifest. They probably see this as just being "normal" or perhaps above average. It is the lament of the truly spiritual that people are not more cooperative and more for the good of the

weak, but if the grandiose weak are only taught to be humble and even weaker by their spiritual authors, then how could things improve for them?

How does a person act when he or she becomes more empowered? Do the empowered victimize or slander others more in their thinking than the disempowered? These are interesting questions since many immature people assume that empowered people can only be mean or cruel.

The empowered that are ethical see others who are less empowered as simply products of their own free will. These less empowered people are accepted by them as a necessary part of the whole. Although not especially empowered in life, they may have their families and friends who dearly love them. They are able to carry on important tasks that we all need to have someone do. They may be more interested in dedicating their life to a simpler type of work than the higher paying positions that the more financially empowered have. There need not be a sense of global inequality distinguished between the more empowered and the less empowered. Someone can be empowered in a corporate setting but not empowered in a family setting. To be a good provider is more than money; it is to be a good provider of emotional support and loyalty.

Overall, the empowered have an acceptance of free will as the determinate of merit. They do not have a debtor mentality, meaning, they are focused on what they create, what income they can generate, instead of what they can be given. The empowered are who they are because *they must* make the right choices. Often those right choices were trained into them by family. They learn to make them from an early age. These are often choices that have some degree of calculation in them by which they will remain empowered. They consistently make the choices that help them in life and this is a part of their overall balance in life. This balance becomes their principle morality. There is an ethical outcome in how these choices pan out, because if one leans too much towards a selfish perspective, one enters into self-defeat, at least, on a social level.

Like dealing with hyperreligiosity or hallucinations in religious practice, dealing with grandiosity in artistic and spiritual matters takes a perspective larger than just secular psychology. The artistic and spiritual that are affected by grandiosity, and who are not additionally suffering from other types of mental illness, may be intelligent and sensitive enough to reason through their grandiosity. This is not seen often in narcissistic and obsessive personality disorders, and borderline disorders, where the person is often not responsive to

therapy nor sees a need for it. This may be because the grandiose spiritual and artistic have ulterior aims besides their own happiness. They have spiritual and artistic values that are important to them and which they may want to see manifested regardless of their own happiness. When they realize their grandiosity makes them ineffective, they may then get professional psychological counseling.

After the counseling of the grandiose has completed, they should then redouble their spiritual or artistic efforts. This will allow them to gain the benefits of spirituality or art in the fullest way possible. What should not develop is the belief that their spirituality or artistic motivation only got them to where they were before therapy. In fact, their dedication to spirituality and art may have gotten them great benefits. There are thousands of books written on the psychological benefits of good spiritual and artistic practices. When, through psychotherapy, the grandiose has learned more about what is true and what is false, where they are gifted and where they need work, they are then set to excel. It would indeed be a shame if they become confused, thinking that it was their spiritual or artistic motivation that led them to their problems. Some positive things in human life only have spiritual and artistic causes.

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