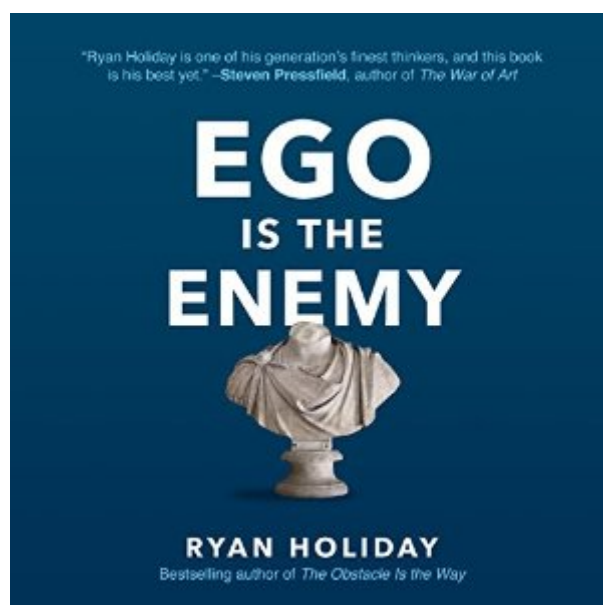


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# Ego Is The Enemy



## Synopsis

"While the history books are filled with tales of obsessive visionary geniuses who remade the world in their images with sheer, almost irrational force, I've found that history is also made by individuals who fought their egos at every turn, who eschewed the spotlight, and who put their higher goals above their desire for recognition." (From the prologue)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As I was reading Ryan Holiday's quotation-rich book *Ego Is the Enemy*, I began to realize one cannot simply tear down one's ego. Such a process is actually twofold: The ego diminishes, and the self-respect flourishes. One event cannot occur without the other. This is a spiritual dynamic albeit a secular and philosophical one in the hands of Ryan Holiday. He wants to remind us with moral stories to be our better selves, our better impulses. A humanist, Holiday believes we can, as Aristotle said, smooth out the warped wood that is human nature. To smooth the wood, we must confront and defuse our ego. He defines the ego as an unhealthy belief in your own importance. He elaborates: "that petulant child inside every person, the one that chooses getting his or her way over anything or anyone else. The need to be better than, more than, recognized for, far past any reasonable utility—that ego. This ego distorts reality, and in fact disconnects us from reality (funny, as I read this book I thought of Walter White from *Breaking Bad*). This taming of the ego, however, cannot be performed in a vacuum. We must at the same time, Holiday reminds us, find a purpose and find our dignity and self-respect. Purpose,

meaning, dignity, self-respect, and endless curiosity are the antidotes to ego. One of the most salient lessons I learned is that nurturing the ego is a form of death or as Holiday, quoting Robert Greene, refers to as "dead time." In one of my favorite passages, we read: "According to Greene, there are two types of time in our lives: dead time, when people are passive and waiting, and alive time, when people are learning and acting and utilizing every second."

The main point of this book is that ego gets in the way of success, personal growth, and doing seriously good work. In just over 200 smallish pages, Holiday defends his point with various examples and explanations. There are three main parts to the book: 1) Aspire, 2) Success, and 3) Failure. Holiday explains how the ego can ruin aspiration and success, and how it can get in the way of learning from failure. He also notes that these three things happen to everyone, so if we can subdue ego in and through them, it'll help make us grow. (As a side there is some cussing, so it's probably not for kids.) I do agree with the basic premise of this book: a narcissist is his own greatest enemy. A big head means a big fall. I enjoyed many of the quotes Holiday used from various people throughout history. A few examples: "It is impossible to learn that which one thinks one already knows" (Epictetus). "When you are not practicing, remember, someone somewhere is practicing, and when you meet him he will win" (Bill Bradley). "People learn from their failures. Seldom do they learn anything from success" (Harold Geneen). I also agreed with Holiday's points about always being a student, of not just talking, but doing, and realizing one is tiny in the big scheme of things. The reason I gave the book 3 stars (which means "average") was because there was quite a bit of repetition and similar statements. I found myself saying, "He's said this already," or "He could have said that in 1 page instead of 4." The repetition also made the book sort of run together, so even though there were 3 parts, they sounded similar.

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