

The Narcissistic Mistake ©

Love It and Leave It

By

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Narcissism

A wave of narcissism swept this country during the late 1960's and 1970's. We heard "Do your own thing." "If it feels good, do it." We read the Gestalt prayer by Fritz Perls, "I do my thing, you do yours, if we meet it is wonderful, if not, it can't be helped."

The representative rubric of this "me-ism" was "**Here's what I want, to Hell with what you want.**" There was a reaction against this error. It was seen as destructive and anti-community. Actually it could have been a building block for a new kind of community. It was not recognized as such. It was seen as a threat. As a result, there was a massive retreat to what was before.

Old Paradigm [European]

What was before? There existed a social paradigm, which we inherited from Europe. Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote of a Social Contract in which the individual gave up something of him or herself in exchange for the protections of society.

Hegel in his dialectic wrote of his "syntheses" in which the fullest expression of the self was service to the state. A lie. We all saw what happened to the individual in such an epistemology. You can imagine the delight of Hitler and Lenin.

The representative rubric was "**I will give up what I want for the good of others.**"

New Paradigm

There is a new paradigm, one that is built on narcissism and goes beyond it. Its rubric is "**Here's what I want, what do you want?**" -Or- **What do you want? here's what I want.**" This model asks the individual to come, not with diminished capacity from giving up of the self, but with full functionality. The gifts available from such fully functioning people are of a higher order, and they are free. They don't need something in return.

Soren Kierkegaard describes such a concept of such a self in counterpoint to Hegel's dialectic. SK denies a synthesis, a harmonious resolution of eternally hostile opposites. For example, Eternal vs. Temporal, Infinite vs. Finite, Possible vs. Necessary. His famous quote is, "The self is a relation (*to both of the eternally hostile opposites*) which relates to itself and to that which established it."

Full functionality is also addressed by Carl Rogers. The skills of Person Centered Approach are necessary and sufficient for the conduct of healthy relationships in this new social paradigm. When persons use these skills, at will, on their own behalf, this

community develops naturally. When persons do not use these skills, this community does not develop. When people are encouraged, maybe urged, to use these skills, then an oppressive community develops.

As most people experimented with and retreated from narcissism as too threatening, the potential exists to grow this anomaly into a more satisfying social group, large or small. One of the measures of success of a group is the satisfaction of the members. In the old paradigm, the group is seen as responsible. In the new, the individual eagerly seeks this responsibility.