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*A Centered Wellness publication educating,  
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## The Chaos of Ego

(From the Introduction to *Illusive Secrets: Discovering the Power of Self-Honesty*)

By [James Patrick McDonald](#)

Trying to understand enlightenment, or setting enlightenment as a state one tries to achieve, limits our experience of willingness and self-discovery. Instead, our purpose is to look at Self in ways we may have never looked before. It's about finding the willingness to make a serious effort to look at oneself without judgment and to accept who we are at any and every moment. It's also our purpose to unlearn our fear-based ways of being in the world and uncover the areas where we are less than truthful with ourselves so that we may experience the inner peace we long to know.

One day I began asking different questions. I began with the intent to explore myself. I set out to look inward each day to find just one thing about which I had not been completely honest with myself. Once found, I waited for the willingness to be honest. I put that intention in place when I realized that having the willingness to look at the areas I found uncomfortable offered the greatest opportunities for growth and the rediscovery of inner peace.

Two perspectives, or interpretations, are available to us at all times. There is an aspect within that thinks and is always reacting to the thoughts, and there is the aspect that is still, and quietly accepts. Ego represents the aspect that thinks and reacts. It is the aspect based in form; the part that believes the world is all-important. It screams and shouts for attention and often gets exactly what it wants: fear, separation, anxiety, worry, incompleteness, reactivity, subtle discontentedness, and lots of doing. In simple terms, what it offers results in suffering and misery covered over by a thin veil of apparent happiness. Personally, that veil was all I was aware of for most of my life.

When we align with ego, we judge everything. When we align with ego, our sense of inadequacy is heightened; wanting increases in an unconscious effort to fill the hole that inadequacy creates. In those moments, life is all about *me*, and joy is obscured. Joy is not lost because we cannot lose what we are. It is merely covered over or blocked from awareness by a ubiquitous sense of guilt that rises

to the surface when we believe we are vulnerable. I was unable to identify the guilt for most of my life as it hid behind restlessness, irritability, discontentment, fear, anger, worry and a whole host of surface emotions.

Essence is the aspect of stillness and quiet acceptance. Essence is the aspect based in the formless that lies behind the raucous shrieking of the ego. It knows that while the world might be important, it's not *that* important. This is the aspect of peaceful acceptance, invulnerability, unconditional love, power, strength, and joy of Being.

An experience of Essence leaves us with the understanding that anything less than peace is not peace. Anything less than total, unchanging, unconditional Love is not Love. Fear is fear and degrees of fear are irrelevant. When we align with Essence, we accept everything as it is. In those moments, we cease to exist and all that remains is joy. Joy and Love are the same. When one begins asking the questions that allow Essence to emerge, we say they are enlightened.

The entries in this book constitute a journey we take together. It is about looking at our own level of Self-honesty with loving compassion and acceptance. The method is simply to notice what we are experiencing (thoughts, feelings, emotions, physical sensations) without asking why and without judging the experience. In the looking inward, we meet ourselves. It can be quite frightening at times, especially when we see things for the first time that we do not wish to see or have never allowed ourselves to see.

For many of us this is not an easy process. It is not a quick fix and there are no *steps* to meeting your True self. If we remain vigilant to uncovering our true Self, the process is one of the most remarkable gifts we can ever receive.

**James Patrick McDonald** is the author of several books across two genres. Through his books, seminars, and presentations, James offers examples and techniques anyone can employ to expand their own sense of awareness and purpose in life. His Student of Experience™ practice opens a simple and accessible approach to finding harmony and inner peace through self-exploration and honesty. *Be a Student of Experience™ and watch your life change.*

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