

References

Kriyananda, S. (1991). *The Essence of Self-Realization*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

Heffner, C. (2001). *Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development*. Retrieved June 3, 2003 from <http://allpsych.com/psychology101/ego.html>

Goals

- reflect on how this book relates to leadership
- reflect on how this book relates to us as leaders in our own experience and setting

Summary

The title of the book is very clear. The 'Essence of Self-Realization' refers to the journey in the discovery of our true self. Western civilizations have a strong determination to accumulate wealth. Success as we know it is usually determined by the amount of materials and money we have. Yogananda (991, in Kriyananda 1991, p1) explains "the material scientist uses the forces of nature to make the environment of man better and more comfortable. The spiritual scientist uses mind power to enlighten the soul." Many of us have tried to use material to fill the emptiness in our lives. Remember the trips to Dairy Queen or the shopping mall. All these events seem to point to our quest for spirituality. The true meaning of life is something we all have strive to try to answer at some point in our lives. These episodes usually arise in between emotional or traumatic times in our lives. Why is it that our spiritual quest occurs in these times and not in times of calm? Why are we not capable of surrendering our soul in times of calm when our minds are at ease? The 'Essence of Self Realization' shows how a disciple's (J. Donald Walters aka Swami Kriyananda) discovers his spirituality. In his journal, his quotes tell us the many things we take for granted are the ingredients that make up our spirituality. The goal to self-realization "means realizing your true self as the great ocean of spirit, by breaking the delusion that you are this little ego, this little human body, and personality" (Kriyananda, 1991, p28). This is turn will summon up a true realization of who we are and what we are all about.

Comment #1

My first thoughts after reading this book was how it relates to leadership. Leadership is the ability to treat all people without prejudice and to 'impose our will on others in a manner that it is accepted freely, willingly, and intelligently' (Kriyananda, 1991, p134). This type of willing co-operation is what leaders strive for. The problem is that with so many different personalities out there. How does a leader invoke this type of co-operation?

Group Task: Your school is having time tabling dilemma. Some of the staff wants a fixed timetable, while others prefer a rotating timetable. As an administrator, outline the issues and table it for discussion with your staff. Use role-play, leadership skill, and spiritual guidance to lead this discussion and to invoke some type of compromise.

Issues:

Resolution:

“To live irresponsibly is to live for the ego, not for God. The greater a person’s emphasis on ego fulfillment, the less his awareness of true joy.”

Now, here is a little Psychology 101. We are all born with our Id. The Id is in place to meet our basic needs for survival in our first three years of life. It is often called the pleasure principle, as it demands for immediate satisfaction. The next stage of development involves our Ego. In this stage, we are now aware and understand that other people have needs as well. We understand that we should be considerate of the reality of the situation and that we are not the most important person in the world. In the Superego stage, our moral attitudes prevail. This is where our conscience guides us in doing what is right and what is wrong. According to Freud, the balance is critical in a normal healthy person.

“The ego is the strongest so that it can satisfy the needs of the id, not upset the superego, and still take into consideration the reality of every situation. It is not an easy job by any means, but if the id gets too strong, impulses and self-gratification take over the person's life. If the superego becomes too strong, the person would be driven by rigid morals, would be judgmental and unbending in his or her interactions with the world.”

(Heffner, 2001)

When we are faced with conflict, quite often there is interplay between the Id, Ego, and Superego. Freud talks about two things that drive our Id, Ego, and Superego. They are sex (Eros or Life Force) and aggression (Thanatos or Death Force) (Heffner, 2001). Sex represents our drive to live, to prosper, and produce offspring. Aggression represents our need to stay alive and stave off threats to our existence, our power, and our prosperity (Heffner, 2001). Imbalances create ego defence mechanisms that are sometimes harmful to our health and look on life. The decisions that we make and how we choose to react to situations give way our reality tunnel.

Individual Task: A parent is upset her daughter missed an ‘A’ by 2%. What would your reaction be from the Id, Ego, and Superego perspectives. Read your reaction to the group.
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Id Reaction:

Ego Reaction:

Superego Reaction:

Group Task: Using the Ego reaction to the dilemma above, explain why you chose to respond this way using past childhood, social, or other experiences as examples.
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Explanation of Ego Reaction:
