

Don't Worry About Getting Credit for Personal Growth

I like pulling myself up by my own bootstraps. Sometimes that's a good thing – I take initiative, I'm not needy, and I can self-motivate and self-actualize.

But along with my bootstrapping desires I also I have a strong desire for people to *know* that I have pulled myself up by my own bootstraps. That's pride at best and crippling ego at worst.

I need to ask myself this: what's the worst that can result if someone or something else gets credit for my improvement? What if people assign the causes of my own hard-won personal growth to someone or something outside of me?

First of all, we're probably all not aware just how much we owe to others. I know I owe a lot of my perspective and understanding of what I need to improve on (and how to do it) to others.

But even setting that aside, it's important to realize that in reality, most people don't give a damn who is responsible for who's improvement*. What they care about is the improvement itself. If I improve, I'm going to be more valuable to them and more pleasant to be around. Period, end of story. Sure, in the short run, someone else may get the credit. People might not see you scrambling to bootstrap. You'll lose the short game of ego.

But you're in this for the long game of improvement, not the short game of ego. And in the long game personal growth matters despite its source. Remember that you're pulling yourself up by your bootstraps not to prove something, but because it's one of the most effective ways to learn.

*There's a Harry Truman (eww) quote which I like for other situations, but which applies here also: "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."