

Ego Dropping: The Magic of Breaking Free from Self-Concern

There's a mindfulness technique I've been practicing for a number of years now, and when I can do it, it's like magic.

The practice is dropping the ego — dropping my self-concern, my sense of being separate from everything else, and returning to wholeness with everything.

While that can sound a bit new age-y, what I've learned is that **almost all of our problems are caused by our self-concern.**

Consider these common problems:

- **Angry at someone else:** We're mad because they were inconsiderate to us, insulted or offended us, made us feel bad about ourselves. But that's because we're caught up in self-concern. We are thinking about ourselves and how they've hurt us. Dropping self-concern, we can see that this other person is hurt in some way, and reacting badly because of it (which we all do sometimes).
- **Worried about failing:** We might not try to do a big project, start a business, write a book, found a non-profit organization, create art ... because we're worried we'll be a failure. This is obviously self-concern. Without this focus on ourselves, we might focus on the people we're serving, or focus on just getting started without worrying too much about the perfect outcome.
- **Procrastination:** We all procrastinate in some way, and this is always caused by self-concern. We don't want to face the discomfort of a difficult task, which is worrying about our comfort (self-concern). Dropping that self-concern, we can just get started without worrying about our comfort, without worrying about failing, without worrying that the task is too hard. Just get started, serving others through doing.
- **Anxious about a social situation:** Going to an event, we worry about what other people will think of us, which is again, our focus on ourselves. Dropping that self-concern, we can think about how going to this event might serve others, we can go there with curiosity about other people, we can go and grow as we practice mindfulness at the event.
- **Eating too much junk:** Like all comforts (games, porn, videos, shopping, etc.), food is a way to comfort ourselves, to give ourselves pleasure. Dropping self-concern, we can see that eating more junk food will lead to worse health, which is not only hurting us but those who we serve in the world. Instead, we can put delicious healthy foods into our bodies to nourish ourselves.
- **Not exercising enough:** Again, this is usually a focus on our own comfort. It's uncomfortable to exercise, it's more comfortable to sit and look at a computer some

more. Dropping self-concern, we can see that exercise is necessary to do the work we want to do, to live a healthy and happy life, to be a vibrant member of our community. And it can also be wonderful, if we let go of a need for constant comfort.

- **Too distracted:** We're constantly checking our phones, social media, messages, email, news sites, and much more. What's going on here? We're caught up in self-concern — what others think of us, our comfort and pleasure, fears of missing out on things, etc. All of it is self-concern. Dropping self-concern, we can let go of checking anything for a little while, and stay with the discomfort of focusing on one thing so we can get our meaningful work done, or have a meaningful connection with another person or with nature.
- **Addictions:** Like comfort food, addictions are about the self-concern we have for our comfort. For example, alcohol addiction is often a way to comfort ourselves when we're stressed, feeling bad about ourselves, feeling angry or depressed. These are all forms of self-concern. Dropping self-concern, we can go through the discomfort of not indulging in our addictions because we know that they're damaging not only to ourselves but to everyone we love, and to the work we want to do in the world.

There are many other kinds of problems, of course, but you can see that self-concern lies at the root of almost all of them. Dropping self-concern means that we can serve others, push into discomfort for the benefit of those around us, and serve a bigger mission with meaningful work.

So how can we drop this self-concern, which could also be called “ego”?

The answer lies in mindfulness practices. I'm going to teach you one here, and encourage you to practice it.

The result is nothing short of magical. All of these problems become easier, and life changes.

The Mindfulness Practice of Ego Dropping

This practice can be done anywhere, no matter what you're doing, but it's best started sitting still, in a quiet place.

Here's how to do it:

1. **Sit still and notice how your body feels.** Find a comfortable, stable seated position, and just notice how your body feels. Scan your body and notice as many sensations as you can. Then just hold all of your bodily sensations in your awareness at once, or as many as you can.
2. **When your mind wanders, bring it back to the present.** Your mind might get caught up in thoughts — that's OK. Just notice that, and come back to the sensations of

the present moment, whichever step you're on.

3. **Open your awareness to sensations all around you.** Next, keep your open awareness, but widen it to include sound sensations from all around you, then touch sensations from outside your body (the air on your skin, clothes on your body, ground beneath your feet), then open your eyes (if they were closed) and notice all sight sensation from all around you — light, colors, textures, shapes. Don't focus on any one thing, just allow your awareness to open to all of these sensations around you.
4. **Keep a relaxed open awareness to just one field of sensation.** Keeping this relaxed, gentle open awareness ... just allow the sensations outside of your body and inside your body to become one field of sensation. There's no outside or inside, it's just all sensation, one big ocean of sensation.
5. **Drop your sense of separation.** Let go of any sense that you are separate from everything around you — it's just one field of sensation. Relax any boundaries and feel at one with everything, returning to wholeness with the universe. It's just one big open experience, constantly changing as each moment changes.
6. **Notice that there's no self — just sensation.** There's no "self" as we normally know it — which means we can't have self-concern. We have dropped the ego, which is something our minds construct, a "self" that's separate from everything around us and which we need to protect from the world. It just drops away as we practice this relaxed, open awareness, one field of sensation, one ocean of experience. We are whole with the world around us, just as we were in the womb.
7. **From this open awareness, open your heart.** Keeping this sense of wide open awareness, dropping separateness, staying in this field of experience ... notice your heart in the middle of it. It's open, tender, loving. It loves everything in its awareness. In fact, your awareness *is* love, and it is all-encompassing. You send out a universal love equally to everything in your awareness, because none of it is separate from you. No one is separate from you — we're all interconnected.

Here's a guided meditation I recorded on this mindfulness practice (right click to save to your computer).

This takes practice, so don't get discouraged if you don't get it at first. Sit and practice daily. Try it when you're on the bus or driving, washing the dishes or in a meeting. You can practice anywhere, doing anything.

What happens once you drop the ego and drop into a wide open, gentle, loving awareness? Magic. You don't have to run to comfort and away from discomfort, you don't have to protect your self-image from others, you don't have to defend yourself or worry about failure or being judged. All of that self-concern drops away, and you are left with two things: peace, and an open heart.