



## Selfishness

September 2006

We all know them, don't we? Those selfish people who always put *their* needs first. Its all about self, self, self. Why can't we all be selfless and always put others first? The world would be a much better place.

Or would it?

Look back over the Conscious Connections newsletters for the last year. They touch on many different subjects, but there is one common thread to most of them – you!

How can you possibly develop yourself, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically or in any other way, if you don't focus on yourself? Much of what we are all trying to do is discover our true selves; to understand our own strengths and weaknesses; to work to our strengths and mitigate our weaknesses. Our own personal development is central to everything we do.

Self, self, self – is that not selfish?

Consider a person who gives up a flourishing career in order to devote their life to caring for a partner or family member with a long term illness. We would probably say that they were truly selfless. But what if they loved that person more than anything else in their life – more than life itself? What if they took that action so they could spend as much time as possible with the person who was ill, simply because doing that made them feel good? Is that selfish or selfless? Either way, is it a bad thing?

There are some who would argue that a degree of selfishness is not only essential, it is also a positive thing. One such person is Ayn Rand, an advocate for the Objectivist movement, who wrote that in order to live, man must hold three things as supreme and ruling values of his life: Reason, Purpose and Self-Esteem. Further, she argued that in order to develop and maintain self esteem, it is necessary to have a rational self interest. Not just a self interest but a *rational self interest*.

The dictionary definition of selfishness usually describes it along the lines of "an undue focus on ones own self interest, at the expense of others". In other words, a person who thinks *only* of themselves and I think we would all agree, that wouldn't be good. We need to take the time to consider the wants, needs and feelings of others too. But not all of the time. Spending our entire life putting others first will do nothing for our own self esteem and so once again, the message is balance.

There are times when we should – we must – put ourselves first. We must feed and nurture ourselves in order to maintain our strength and grow. In doing so, we become better, stronger people who are more capable to assist and encourage others. We must look deep within ourselves and understand our own deep rooted needs, our strengths and our weaknesses in order to understand who we really are and what our path is in life. We must have a *rational* self interest in order to develop and maintain our self esteem.

There are also other times when we must put the interests of others first, in order to maintain a degree of harmony and balance. We must use our inner strength to help encourage and nurture others. By allowing the needs and desires of others to occasionally take priority over our own needs and desires, we are not only helping build the self esteem of the other person but are also acknowledging that we are comfortable with ourselves and who we are. In doing so, we actually strengthen our own self esteem – or is that just being selfish????

No. The really selfish people are the ones who cannot keep the selfish and selfless sides in balance. They are selfish even when they try to be selfless. An old friend of mine is the sort of person we would all love to meet on the road to Damascus. He simply can't turn away from someone in need. He's always offering to give a helping hand to his colleagues at work if they have too much to do. Rather than pointing them in the right direction, he will take on their problems and sort them out. He really can't do enough to help, even if it means he has to put in extra hours at evenings and weekends to get through all the work. A perfect example of a selfless person, right? Wrong!

He's known around the office as a soft touch. When his colleagues can't be bothered to do something or a feeling a little pressured, they head straight for him with their sob stories. Of course, he buys them all and takes over. Meanwhile, his kids are growing up not knowing him. He has not sat down to an evening meal with his family for over a year, and to cap it all, his colleagues are seen as efficient effective workers and are promoted, while he is stuck in his rut. Is that the outcome he wants? Probably not, but by carrying out this role, he makes himself feel important. He believes his colleagues need him. He's a selfish person who is satisfying his own need to feel important while his family crumbles in front of his eyes. He needs to balance his own needs with the needs of his family and rationalize his self interest.

So, how do we achieve this balance?

- Take some time out to reflect on where you currently sit on the scale of selfish to selfless
- Think about why you are where you are – what do you get out of being that way? Do you have a rational self interest? Do you have no self interest? Is your self interest overdeveloped?
- Think about those who are close to you – family, friends, and colleagues. How do you think they see you?
- Think about their needs and desires. Do you help feed them? A lot? A little? Not at all?
- As you build up this picture, you will soon start to spot the gaps. You will begin to appreciate how you could change your behaviour a little in order to move one way or another back towards the middle of the selfish – selfless continuum.

Good luck!

**Angel Blessings**

*Julie and Steve*

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## **From the Angels:**

Your angels are standing by waiting for you to ask for their assistance Don't worry that any request is too large or too small If we can help, we will do so immediately and you will soon see results of our assistance."

## **Julie Lomas M.I.A.C.H.T.**

Julie is a Usui Reiki Ryoho Master / Teacher, Angel Therapist, Crystal Healing Therapist, Physic Reader, Past Life Regressionist

Julie holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education and is the founder member and Managing Director of Conscious Connections.

She is a member of the International Association of Crystal Healing Therapists and has been practicing and teaching these holistic therapies for 14 years.

She has been conducting regular International workshops and seminars on Reiki, Angel Therapy, Crystals, stress and relaxation in the Middle East Gulf Countries, USA, Greece, Europe, and UK for 12 years.

Her life focus is now to bring spiritual healing into the mainstream business world and helping people from all sectors of the world community to empower themselves.

Julie also writes for several magazines and publications

## **Steve Ritchie**

Steve is a Usui Reiki Ryoho Master / Teacher /Practitioner, Angel Therapist and Crystal Therapist (in professional training). Steve holds an MBA in General Management and is Managing Director of Conscious Connections.

Steve spent over 25 years in international corporate business. His life focus now is on bringing spiritual healing into the mainstream business world, addressing areas such as personal confidence, leadership and stress management, through the use of meditation, chakra breathing, Reiki, Angelic Therapy and Crystal Healing.

Steve has been conducting Reiki, Angel Therapy, stress and relaxation workshops for several years.