

(Preview – Free Copy)

# THE EGOSYSTEM

A Synopsis of the Human Condition

Z A I D I S M A I L

# Contents

<a href="#"><u>Preface</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>About the Author</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Prologue</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Introduction to the Egosystem</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>The Egosystem at Play</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Mindfulness and the Egosystem</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Stress and the Egosystem</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Defining the Egosystem</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Needs</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Assumptions</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Fears</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Behaviours</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Responses</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Perceptions</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Implementing the Egosystem</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Conviction</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Reflection</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Meditation</u></a> .....	

<a href="#"><u>A Collection of Essays</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Finding My Way</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>The Gravity of You</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Finding Balance</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Finding Balance – Take II</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>The Beauty of Defeat</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Models of Harm</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Once I Know Why</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>From Disappointment, to Despondence, to Depression</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>The Sadness of Depression</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>The Placebo Effect</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Recognise My Struggle</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Letting Go</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Giving Up</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Gratitude</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Reinvention</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>What If You Were In Love With You?</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Restless</u></a> .....	
<a href="#"><u>Who Puts a Smile on the Face of the Village Idiot?</u></a> .....	

# Preface

Appreciate the effort that you are putting in to improve your life. The fact that you intend to read this book to improve your self-awareness confirms that you are invested in wanting to make things better. Improving the world for yourself and for those around you is the most fulfilling endeavour you will ever undertake. Believe it or not, it remains fulfilling even at times when it is not appreciated because the knowledge of having improved someone's life because of your unique contribution remains a piece of success that no one can take from you.

This book is not intended to be read in one sitting. If you manage to do that, and absorb the insights and perspectives that it offers, then you have earned my deepest respect. It is not a complicated book per se. It appears complicated to many because it challenges the norms that rule our lives. You may find it necessary to read a seemingly simple statement more than once just to confirm that where you expected the statement to lead is in fact contrary to what was your assumption. This is not

a cause for concern. It simply means that your perspectives are being challenged in ways that you are not used to, and more importantly, it means that you were not fully aware of the assumptions that you were making around that point.

Understanding your needs, recognising your assumptions, embracing your fears, mastering your behaviours, honing your responses, and establishing more informed perceptions about the world are all outcomes that will naturally result from your time reading this book. It does not provide you with exercises to do, or mantras to repeat to achieve the changes that will reduce the dis-ease that you may feel. Instead, it simply makes you aware of why you respond to life the way that you do, which in turn prompts the natural curiosity and intelligence of the mind to make conscious choices to either accept who you are, or to change the cycle if you prefer to be better.

It is not a book to be read once and then set aside. Instead, my hope is that it will be a book that will become a companion to reference from time to time to remind yourself about why you may not be as effective as you would like to be, or perhaps a reminder as to why others behave in ways that defy logic. Either way, it is not a self-help manual, nor is it a manual

to be able to make others more predictable. It is only through our knowledge of ourselves that we will be able to relate to and understand others. It unpacks in a non-threatening way our self-defeating behaviours, and lays bare our defence mechanisms that often hold us back in life.

This book will not impose an outcome or define what your reality should be. Instead, it will make you aware of your reality and offer you insights that will empower you to choose whether you wish to live with the way things are, or to change it. The power always was, and always will be yours and yours alone.

# Introduction to the Egosystem

*Let me never fall into the vulgar mistake of dreaming  
that I am persecuted whenever I am contradicted.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

People have often accused me of expecting too much from them. I disagree. I think that people expect too little from themselves. We are often so focused on defending ourselves from being the perceived victims of circumstances, and others around us, that we fail to protect ourselves from becoming victims of ourselves. In a world that we have engineered to create victims for new opportunities for profit, the abrasive mind-set that it spawns quickly sets the tone for how we perceive our worth relative to the world around us. I used to think that I interacted with various ecosystems as I worked my way through life, or simply through an average day, but the more I live, the more I realise that it is the *Egosystems* that drive the events around me rather than any ecosystem I previously perceived.

The Egosystem is the sum-total of how we respond to daily encounters with others, relative to how we perceive ourselves. It is most prominent when we respond through instinctive reflexes rather than conscious and purposeful action. Instinctive reflexes are a result of years of habit-forming assumptions that we eventually grow to believe is our innate nature. We grow to believe that it is who we are and are

therefore more likely to believe that we cannot change or control it.

The Egosystem is what causes us to grow defensive in the face of opposition, where we feel persecuted or offended if our opinion is rejected; or we feel attacked or aggrieved when we are unsuccessful at soliciting the attention that we desire.

When we fail to recognise the Egosystems at play, we inevitably get drawn into it and find ourselves trying to defend our contribution in a space that is already dominated by the egos of others. There is no value that can be offered in such a setting. You either play to the egos that you are surrounded with, or you disrupt. When you play to it, you become the disrupted and inevitably find yourself toeing the line to a tune you did not choose. But toeing the line offers inclusion and a hint of acceptance, which is comforting at a superficial level. This is not limited to our social circles though, and in fact, more prone to exist in our professional circles where almost everything becomes a measuring contest. When you disrupt that space, you create opportunity to challenge the status quo, and to prompt others into a state of mindfulness rather than blind tradition.

We are all capable of being morons, so we should not celebrate a successful moron because there are too many principled fools that fell because of the moron's manipulations. But principled fools do not seem to garner much respect either because they appear naïve or foolhardy in their convictions. It is therefore not surprising that there is not much respect in this world, let alone respect for the world we live in. The ecosystem of earth is contaminated by the Egosystem of us, but we seem to be looking for answers everywhere but within.

We complicate life when we present ourselves in a way that does not reflect an informed view of who we are, nor the convictions that we internally subscribe to. Mindfulness is what is needed if we hope to recognise those moments when we are about to step on that slippery slope presented by our egos. But mindfulness itself, or even its pursuit, often leaves us distracted in our contemplation of what is needed to be mindful.

I do not think I am alone in such fickleness of focus. At one time when presenting this to a very curious but vocal audience, we had a lengthy debate about whether fear preceded needs, or vice versa. Fear is a response to a situation, and therefore cannot be held accountable for the needs that we have.

The innate needs that drive us, like wanting to be seen as competent, feeling significant, feeling appreciated, or being liked by others to name a few, is what prompts our fears in the face of how we wish to be perceived by those around us. Our fears stem from our perception of the probability of the fulfilment of the needs that drive us. The greater our belief in the probability of it being fulfilled, the less likely we are to grow aggressive, or to feel threatened when those needs rise to the surface.

Therefore, our beliefs guide our perceptions about our ability to solicit the opinions that we wish others would have of us. As an example, if I want to appear competent in a specific setting, I need to convince myself that I am at least well-read on the subject matter being discussed in that setting. If I doubt my competence on the subject but still want to be perceived as competent, I would be evasive, defensive, or downright bullish in that setting at the slightest hint of being challenged or having my lack of knowledge exposed. This is simply because if my lack of knowledge is exposed, it would undermine my need to be perceived as competent. In other words, if I do not know, but do not want others to know that I do not know, I will become

defensive to prevent anyone from taking advantage of my weakness. Simple, right? Probably not.

But this all still sounds more complicated than it really is. The truth is that we need to embrace the fact that we are attention whores by default. The ethics and principles with which we seek such attention is what makes us either whore-ish or noble. It is the same for all our interactions with society and the prevailing norms. If we act within the socially accepted norms, we are embraced or at the least, tolerated. If we do not, we are isolated, or ridiculed, or simply dismissed when we try to contribute. Unless we are entertainers, in which case we are celebrated for anything but being human or normal. That absence of having our humanness recognised and appreciated is what has led many celebrated personalities to self-destruction. The question then arises as to whether our convictions in our views is stronger than our need for inclusion. When our convictions prevail over our needs, we change the world. When our needs drive our convictions, we become attention whores.

(End Preview – Free Copy)