

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE EGO?

Q: What is inherently wrong with the ego? You essentially seem to be saying 'no ego - no problem' (and meditation destroys the ego). Why is the ego problematic in itself?

Linda: It's not the ego – or the mind – that's the problem; you're the problem. That's the mistake that a lot of people make. They say something else is the problem, and they don't realise that the source of what they *perceive* as problems is really themselves.

I prefer not to use the term 'ego' – I very rarely use it. I prefer to use the term 'mind', because 'ego' is used in so many different ways, and has so many different connotations.

Essentially, the mind doesn't need to be a problem. It's our reaction to the mind, not the mind itself. The mind in itself is a very useful tool when it's in its place, but we also need to distinguish the difference between the mind and the brain.

The brain, which is a purely mechanical organism, is responsible for most of our mental (and physical) functions, whereas the mind is an entity. You can't see it. You can't grab hold of it. It's this entity that we as individuals, and society encourage to rule our lives. It starts when we're very young, and as we get older, we encourage it to become stronger and stronger and stronger, until, for a lot of people, it drives them crazy.

Meditation doesn't destroy the mind. There is nothing inherently wrong with the mind. It's our attachment to the mind – our reaction to our thoughts – that becomes the problem.

So meditation is really seeing that we are not the mind. It doesn't destroy the mind; it puts the mind in its place.

The idea that there's a problem is something that's been encouraged by the mind. The mind is always saying, 'this is a problem', because it's separating you from what is. It's always creating this illusion of separation, and when you believe you're separate, that's the problem. But really, there are no problems. We just think there are problems – 'think' being the operative word. As long as we believe we're our thoughts – as long as we identify with our thoughts - we feel that there's a problem.

There weren't any problems to start with. We're the ones who created the problem. Enlightenment is really realizing that there are no problems.