



## Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

Ajahn Kumāro Bhikkhu, Resident Monastic  
122 Arlington Street, Unit B, Asheville, NC 28801  
Elisha Buhler's telephone #: (910) 922-1549  
website: [mittameditation.com](http://mittameditation.com)  
email: [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com)

## March 2025 Newsletter



### **The ego takes on a role as either a "hero" or a "victim"**

The ego is a dissociated part of the mind that is not integrated with the totality of reality and its illusionary identity is to be separate from others and from the cosmos. The ego generally but not necessarily hinders spiritual growth because it is the source of desires, attachments and fears that cause suffering. Transcending the ego and escaping from its commanding influence over the mind is one way of understanding enlightenment.

The ego has an important function in protecting the physical body and the emotional "self." However, the true identity of the mind is neither the body nor the emotional "self" but is consciousness, the unconditioned awareness. The ego is to be dethroned from its mastery over the mind and be tamed to be subservient to the intuitive wisdom and loving-kindness aspects of consciousness.

The January 2023 Newsletter - egoic consciousness, the false self, discusses the illusion and behavior of the ego. This newsletter will discuss the ego's role playing as either a "hero" or a "victim" in response to problems and challenges encountered within the dramas of life.

The ego as "hero" has the following behavior characteristics.

- The hero sees itself as capable, strong, and proactive; approaches challenges with a sense of determination and confidence. The hero has the desire to take charge in all situations.
- The hero works to control and dominate relationships and the physical environment; this is due to the ego's desire to be superior and more important than others and the world at large. The ego's sense of self-worth and identity is invested in appearing superior, a separate self, and the most important center in the universe.
- The hero's sense of exaggerated self-importance sees itself as the savior, problem-solver, and the only one capable of saving itself, others and the universe because all others are seen to be inferior.
- The hero is prideful, ambitious, and consumed with an overwhelming purpose to succeed.
- Examples of the hero is someone who sees themselves as the one who can "save" their family, society, religion or team, as being indispensable.

The disadvantages of the role of hero are as follows.

- The hero is overconfident and arrogant. The hero overestimates their abilities, dismissing advice and underestimating challenges, leading to poor decision-making.
- The hero experiences burnout and exhaustion. The hero consumed with problem solving and trying to "save the day" is emotionally and physically draining, leading to stress and burnout.
- The hero avoids collaboration. The hero is disinclined to seeking help from others, believing they must handle every problem alone, which limits teamwork and shared success.
- The hero needs validation. The hero seeks external recognition, tying their self-worth to materialistic achievements rather than wholesome and skillful values.
- The hero needs to be in control. The hero does not delegate authority and does not accept that some situations are beyond their control, leading to frustration and micromanagement.
- The hero has unrealistic expectations. Playing the role of hero creates an unrealistic self-image, making failures and setbacks harder to accept.
- The hero promotes dependency. The hero's tendency of stepping in to solve problems for others will prevent those individuals from developing their own resilience and problem-solving skills.

The ego as "victim" has the following behavior characteristics.

- The victim perceive themselves as powerless, disadvantaged, or unfairly treated by circumstances and others. The victim emphasize blame, helplessness, and a sense of being at the mercy of external factors. This leads to feelings of frustration, resentment, and a lack of agency.
- The victim blames others, the environment or past kamma for finding itself drowning in suffering and feeling helpless to improve circumstances.
- The victim redirect blame for causing harm from itself onto the other. The victim acts as the innocent and others deserve punishment. The victim cries and points blame at anyone and the environment instead of investigating itself as the source of conditions that caused the suffering.
- The victim feels powerless and wronged by external forces. The victim attributes all their problems to others, believing they have no or little control over their present and future circumstances.
- The victim experiences self-pity, resentment, and avoids taking responsibility.
- The victim perpetuates a cycle of inaction, dependency and prevents growth by avoiding accountability.

The disadvantages of the role as victim are as follows.

- The victim experiences loss of personal power. The victim feels powerless and incapable of changing their circumstances, leading to inaction.
- The victim tends to blame and have resentment. The victim shifts responsibility onto others and external factors, fostering bitterness and does not engage in self-reflection and growth.
- The victim reinforces helplessness. The victim has the belief that effort is futile, reducing motivation to take proactive steps in life.
- The victim is emotionally draining. The victim feelings of injustice, frustration, and sadness takes a toll on mental and emotional well-being.
- The victim has limited opportunities. The victim is discouraged to taking risks, trying new things, and seizing opportunities, which lead to stagnation.
- The victim has trouble in relationships. People distance themselves from someone who constantly sees themselves as a victim, as it is emotionally draining or frustrating to engage with persistent negativity.
- The victim is dependent on external validation. Seeking sympathy and validation from others creates an unhealthy cycle of needing external reassurance instead of building internal resilience.
- The victim is resistant to solutions. The victim rejects constructive feedback and solutions, as the victim's identity is dependent on maintaining the perception of helplessness.

Roles are not fixed and can vary depending on the situation and the mind's ability to adapt in the face of adverse conditions. Awareness of role playing is crucial for personal development and navigating challenges effectively. Recognizing when the ego takes on either role allows the mind to consciously choose to abandon the roles for more wholesome and skillful responses.

The ego's inclination to be either a hero or a victim is a coping mechanism to navigate life's challenges. Personal growth comes from transcending role playing, embracing awareness, and cultivating a mindset of resilience, responsibility, and acceptance.

Going beyond the ego's roles of hero and victim allows the mind to embrace a more balanced, conscious, and empowered way of engaging with life. The advantages of going beyond the roles of hero and victim are as follows.

- There is emotional freedom when liberated from role playing. When the mind does not attach to the identity of hero or victim, then the mind will experience life with equanimity, responding to challenges without being controlled by ego-driven narratives.
- Awareness is beyond role playing, the wise mind recognizes limiting patterns of conditional thinking and behavior, and make conscious choices instead of reacting automatically.
- Authentic relationships are cultivated by removing the need to play hero (rescuing others) or victim (seeking sympathy), relationships are genuine when based on mutual respect and support rather than dependency or control.

- Enhanced problem-solving and adaptability are available when not reacting from a fixed conditioned identity. The wise mind assess situations objectively, finding practical and creative solutions without the burden of proving themselves or feeling helpless.
- The experience of less stress and burnout is available when letting go of the hero's need to fix everything or the victim's feeling of powerlessness; this eliminates emotional and mental strain, leading to peace and well-being.
- A sense of inner power and empowerment comes from recognizing the mind's essential nature and reality as consciousness, and does not take the drama of life personally. The wise mind has no need for external validation and navigates life with resilience and confidence.
- Acceptance and flow arises beyond the ego's role playing, life is seen as a continuous process of learning and growth rather than a struggle between control and helplessness.
- The mind's ability to let go of the contents of experience and the dramas of life, leads to a peaceful and fulfilling existence.

Instead of identifying with the ego's role of hero or victim, identify with the ground and essence of reality; i.e. pure consciousness.

Consciousness is not personal and therefore not a self. Consciousness is not "my" consciousness or "your" consciousness; consciousness is all there is in reality and is not possessed or influenced by anyone or anything.

- Consciousness is the unchanging awareness that observes all contents of experience.
- While the ego identifies with the story of "I am the hero" or "I am the victim," train the mind to identify with consciousness: the unconditioned, unborn, non-dying, impersonal watcher.
- Consciousness is independent of the contents of experience.
  - Consciousness is not disturbed, changed or affected in any way by the fluctuations of physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, emotions, perceptions or role playing.
  - Pleasant and unpleasant feelings are temporary phenomena arising and vanishing within the field of consciousness.
- The wise mind that identifies with consciousness views the contents of experience as waves on the ocean, transient, yet unable to disturb the depth of the ocean itself; the ocean represents consciousness while the waves represent the contents of experience.
- Imagine consciousness as the vast sky and the contents of experience as clouds. The clouds may be stormy, fluffy, or fleeting, but they can never alter the sky's limitlessness, boundlessness and purity. When the wise mind identifies with the sky (consciousness) and not the clouds (contents of experience), then the mind will be liberated from suffering.
- The wise mind does not cling to role playing and narratives, and are no longer trapped in the dramas of life. The roles of hero and victim dissolve because there is no "me" to play those parts, there is only the awareness witnessing the play.

Practices that trains the mind to live as pure consciousness are the following.

- Train the mind to watch and investigate the quality of thinking and behavior to determine if there is role playing. What role is the mind playing and is it necessary? How peaceful would the mind be if not playing roles?
- When the mind chooses to act out a role, be mindful and recognize that the mind's real identity is not the role. The role is the mind's part in the drama of life and that the role and the drama are but illusions and temporary manifestations of conditions. The drama constantly changes, therefore identify with the awareness of the drama and role playing.
- Cultivate presence by anchoring the mind in the present moment. Do not get involved or proliferate with the contents of experience. Aspire for continuous meditation, outside of formal meditation, where the mind is trained to stay present, in the here and now.
- Observe the contents of experience without attachment and identification. Notice physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, perceptions and emotions without identifying with them. For example, instead of "I am angry," recognize, "There is anger arising in the mind."

- Embrace the Eternal Now. Realize that the ego's role depends on past stories and future projections. In the eternal present, these constructs lose their influence over the mind.

## Announcements

- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center has a presence on Meet-Up social media and we ask that you please sign-up for every event that you are planning to attend at [www.MeetUp.com](http://www.MeetUp.com). Some people are intimidated by a small number of attendees and a larger number will be encouraging.
- Please help advertise Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center by providing a review at [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps).

## Activities of the Meditation Center

- Group sitting meditation practice for one hour is held Monday through Friday at 6:30AM and everyday at 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) on the days and time you would like to participate.
- Group sitting meditation practice for two hours is held every Saturday and Sunday at 6:30AM.
- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the five precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop is held on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) if you are planning to participate.
- A recording of a Dhamma Talk from an experienced Thai Forest Teacher will be played on the third Sunday of each month. Sitting meditation starts at 4:30PM and the Dhamma Talk will be played afterwards. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) if you are planning to participate.
- Every Saturday at 4:15PM the Meditation Center will be cleaned. Please join us in maintaining a clean space for practicing and discussing the Dhamma.
- There is a Library at the Meditation Center. You may browse for books to borrow at 5:00PM and check out the books for three weeks.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl. Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.
- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more additional information please send an email to [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com). We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

## Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.



- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website [www.mittameditation.com](http://www.mittameditation.com).
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website [www.mittameditation.com](http://www.mittameditation.com) and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.