

What drives your behavior – the Ego or the Higher Self?

(Adapted from *SQ21 – The Twenty-One Skills of Spiritual Intelligence* by Cindy Wigglesworth)

EGO:	HIGHER SELF:
Acts out of habit or knee-jerk reactions based on old information or experiences	Does not jump to conclusions; maintains an open mind while waiting for more data and considering many possible interpretations
Focuses on what other people have done wrong or how unfair the world is. Does NOT consider what I have done to contribute to the problem	Sees everyone involved as contributing in some way to the problem (including myself)
Sees only the bad things that will come from this. Exaggerates negative emotions such as fear, anger, worry, sadness, hopelessness, revenge, jealousy, etc.	Seeks to see everything on an even keel: the harm and the gifts. Even if the situation is horrible something good might come from it. Contributes positive emotions of hope, gratitude, empathy, compassion, etc.
Wants “justice” in the sense of revenge – even if that is achieved only through bad-mouthing the person or organization rather than causing physical harm.	Seeks to find forgiveness of the situation first.
Action is motivated by anger. The limbic system dominates and higher brain functions are engaged only in service of the anger. Thought processes are NARROW	Recognizes that where I stand in my mind/heart matters. Focuses on healing negative emotions before acting. Brings multiple intelligences to bear on the situation (wisdom, compassion, inner calm). Thought processes are WIDE.
Seeks only data that confirms my dislike of the person or my interpretation of the events. Refuses to see or acknowledge any information that disagrees with how I see things. Gets upset with people who challenge my assumptions.	Actively seeks new information, especially that which might differ from my assumptions and habitual interpretations. Finds relief in breaking through old assumptions and limitations.
Refuses to take responsibility for the problem or situation. It is clearly the other person’s fault or just what happened.	Owns all mistakes and finds relief in taking responsibility for problems. Accepting that I help create problems means that I can choose differently the next time and choose more wisely. Feels gratitude for the wisdom and compassion that come from mistakes.