7 Steps to Manage Ego Problems

The How-To Guide for "Somebody Else"

Introduction to Ego-holism Recovering

by Tim Allston
the egoholic, recovering
Testimonials

“Unfortunately, Timmy is the perfect person to write this book.”
Zeola Allston, Retired School Principal and College Administrator, and Mother of The Author

“Tim: Your Ego-holic recovering concept is one of the most needed subjects I’ve ever seen surface. I believe your understanding of this subject will have a major, positive impact on society. I don’t know of anyone else who speaks or writes about anything like this, much less who has the courage to admit that they are ‘in recovery.’ This takes great courage and is from the Lord.”
Juanell Teague, Author, The Zig Ziglar Difference: How the Greatest Motivational Speaker of the Century Has Changed Lives—And How He Can Change Yours

“Tim Allston has boldly taken the first steps to recovering. It takes guts to reveal your faults; especially if the enemy is yourself—and your fault is an addiction! He has recognized his problem and admitted he can’t become a new person himself. With God’s help, Tim is taking steps to become the person God designed him to be and in the process helping others discover the way to recovering. Thanks, Tim!”
Kay Kuzma, Ed. D., Author and Founder, Family Matters Ministry
Introduction

So, What’s The Problem?

Un-masking 2016’s Politics, The NBA and The NFL

…Through a Busted Streetlight?

Two thousand sixteen will be remembered as the leap year… of what? Four news events raised questions, and their answers also exposed my addiction problem.

1. U.S. politics featured people campaigning to become the 45th U.S. President: both experienced elected officials (“politicians”), and others who had distinguished themselves previously in other high-profiled careers.

Q1: Why would anyone who has achieved large-scale notoriety and public success in their areas of training and expertise—e.g., Republicans Dr. Ben Carson (medicine), Ms. Carly Fiorina (business), and Donald Trump (real estate, entertainment)—not content themselves to thrive and remain “in their lane,” but instead seek to transition into another highly competitive world, not at the entry level, but leap-frogging to be elected as the leader of the free world?

2. Just prior to opening its Democratic National Committee (DNC) convention in July, newly-appointed interim DNC chair Ms. Donna Brazile visited and apologized personally to independent socialist challenger Senator Bernie Sanders and his staff, then vowing, “I think, the allegations, the e-mails, the insensitivity, the stupidity needs to be addressed.”

Q2: Why would the DNC, featuring its frontrunner and subsequent presidential nominee Secretary Hillary Clinton, feel the need to undercut Sanders, according to the reports of leaked emails, which led to DNC chair Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz’s resignation (à la a contemporary version of the Republican National Committee’s 1972 break-in of DNC’s Watergate headquarters, which led to President Richard Nixon’s 1974 resignation)?

3. The National Basketball Association (NBA)’s biggest off-season news story showcased a joining-together of the two biggest losers from its 2016 playoffs. The 2015 defending NBA champion Golden State Warriors:

- finished the 2015–2016 regular season with a record 73 wins, led by 2015 and 2016 Most Valuable Player (MVP) and scoring/steals/free throw champ Stephen Curry and Coach of the Year Steve Kerr;
- won the 2016 Western Conference championship over the Oklahoma City Thunder, led by former MVP, Rookie of the Year, six-time All-Star, two-time Olympic gold medalist and four-time scoring champion Kevin Durant; but
- failed to defend its NBA crown, by losing to the Cleveland Cavaliers; and weeks later
- obtained Kevin Durant in a trade.

Q3: Why would either party seek to create this combination, which ESPN analyst Stephen A. Smith
4. The National Football League’s 2016 season opened with New England Patriots’ star quarterback, Tom Brady, sidelined with a four-game suspension for his participation in the 2015 “Deflategate.”

**Q4: Why would these four-time Super Bowl champs and its Hall of Fame shoo-in leader feel the need to engage in a Deflategate scenario?**

The answers to these questions and my personal problem all expose an addiction that’s actually older than Planet Earth! But please forgive me. I’m now leap-frogging ahead of myself…

My answer to my problem began with—
A Busted Streetlight.

When you and I are on a street that is so dark that you can almost feel that darkness, an illuminated street light offers safety, protection and a clearer path to your destination.

Conversely, a busted streetlight invites potential danger, foreboding and introduces an unsure direction to follow…

    except in my case.

In January 2002, as an early-stage entrepreneur, my first client—a computer technology company named, ironically, Streetlight Technology—busted me after only six weeks. My addiction problem was illuminated as never before.

“Tim: you needed help, and you knew it. And yet, you wouldn’t ask for our help,” explained client Jim True during our brief Dear-John meeting. “Firing you is one of the best things that can happen to you as a new entrepreneur. Talent is not your problem.” So, what was my problem?

What caused me, according to Jim True (how fitting a last name!), to need help but not reach out and seek it? What made me flunk my “freshman orientation” as an entrepreneur?

Flashback 33 years, to 1969.
“No, I’m not coming (back) home.”

Dad and Mom, Thomas and Zeola Allston, raised their four children in a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Christian home, attending SDA church and SDA schools. They practiced the Bible’s Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT): “A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.”

To them, the SDA home, SDA church and an SDA education constituted those three intertwined cords. Period. Non-negotiable. End of conversation…
Until Thursday, July 24, 1969 (11:38 a.m.!)  

After my summer-long series of conversations and artful negotiations, Dad told me that for a “one-year trial period,” I could transfer from SDA Greater Boston Academy (GBA) to hometown Everett (MA) High School, his alma mater.

My jaw dropping ceased immediately for two reasons:

1. At that moment, I glanced down at the dashboard clock of our 1961 Chevrolet Parkwood station wagon, as he drove. Still stunned, I logged into my memory, “11:38 a.m., Thursday, July 24, 1969”: remember this red-letter date and time”; but more importantly, I logged in his follow-up prophetic pronouncement.

2. “Timmy: your mother and I know what’s going to happen; but you will need to experience this for yourself.”

What did Daddy mean? As a 14 year old, I was finally un-shackled from:

- nine years of choking private school neckties and uniforms;
- mandatory 8:00 a.m. chapel assemblies; and most importantly
- stifling SDA rules and restrictions, like no competitive sports.
Now, I reasoned, I could take my God-given talents to a much larger and much more appreciative platform. And I did.

Unlike GBA, Everett High School’s platforms elevated my ambitions, as I became:

- the school’s oratorical champion as a junior and a senior;
- the Massachusetts and the runner-up New England oratorical champions, as a senior;
- a varsity letterman in basketball and track and field—almost breaking Dad’s 1939 Everett High School high jump record; and
- a recipient of academic scholarships to Dartmouth and Williams Colleges, among others. I chose the one from Hampton Institute (HI) in Virginia because, as I told my mother, “I need to go someplace far away where I will not be known as ‘Elder Allston’s or ‘Principal Allston’s son” (“I guess that’s a nice way of saying that!” Mom responded, knowingly).
Similar to Everett High School, Hampton Institute—a private historically Black college-now-university (HBCU)—maximized my gifts and talents even more. There, I was:

- elected the student body president;
- selected as managing and features editors for its student newspaper;
- initiated into Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and later became a Life Member;
- elected Alpha’s first undergraduate vice president in its Virginia state organization, and elected twice to its national board of directors as the highest-ranking college brother on the East Coast;
- crisscrossing the country as a keynote speaker, for both HI and the Alphas; and
- sifted through seven job offers in 1977, and accepted the offer from Burson-Marsteller, and headed to its New York headquarters.

In spite of those successes, however, in 1973, Mom and Dad sensed my addiction problem before I did, or at least before I wanted to sense it. It was time for their Prodigal Son (of Luke 15:11-32) to come home to repair those three broken cords, they reasoned.

On August 29, 1972, my family had moved from greater Boston to Huntsville, Alabama. There, Mom and Dad accepted administrative staff positions at Oakwood College, a 900-student SDA HBCU and Mom’s alma mater. On that same day, ironically, I Greyhound-Bussed it to Hampton, Virginia, to become an HI freshman.
Divorce Papers

Mom wrote to me in November 1973, during my sophomore year first semester, telling me that the current Hampton Institute fall semester would be their last non-SDA tuition payment. “No, Mom; I’m not coming (home to Oakwood)” was the first really defiant act from this 19-year old mama’s boy. She then pinpointed my addiction problem, *and who better*? She had been my:

- my nursery school team facilitator;
- elementary school principal; and
- seventh- and eighth-grade team teacher.

Now as Oakwood’s student activities director, Mom scheduled and monitored its cultural activities. She knew intimately my pedigree. She was also my mother and principal pamperer. Yet, I could not dodge her knockout punch—why?—because even though I could see it coming, my addiction problem blurred my vision.

“Well Timmy: I’m sorry to hear you say that you’re staying there at Hampton, and not transferring here to Oakwood or any of our other (SDA) schools.”
The Dismissive Roll Call

“Let’s see now,… You’re currently:

- managing editor of the *Hampton Script* newspaper;
- member of the Cultural Arts/Lyceum Series Committee;
- president of the English Club;
- poised to make the Honor Roll, with your 3.6 grade point average;
- president of that radical student organization—elected as a freshman, above all of those upperclassmen;
- your sister Dawn tells me that you’re about to pledge that Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity group—which, I’m told, includes members like Martin Luther King, Thurgood Marshall, W.E.B. DuBois and your hero, Paul Robeson; and
- from my impressions while visiting you at Hampton last month during your annual Parents Weekend, you’re obviously a ‘Big Man on Campus,’ and poised to become the next student body president—

“We can’t offer you all those things here at Oakwood. We’re a simple Christian school, and our focus is on things eternal, and less upon worldly accoutrements. Hear me now, Thomas Gray Allston the Third:”—calling your full name is always a clear foreboding indicator…

“There’s nothing wrong with Hampton. At all. It is a fine and prestigious college, a wonderful, academically sound school. But it is not equipped or *intended* to prepare you for eternity. And you know that. But you don’t want to allow yourself to see that. You see, Hampton is not your problem; your ego is your problem. You can’t see yourself here at little Oakwood College. Our young ladies, for example:

- wear long skirts;
- wear no makeup; and
- carry big thick Bibles!

“And you can no longer see yourself BACK in this world.

“Timmy, we love you, and we’ll continue to pray for you,” and with that benediction, Mom’s in-your-face, take-no-prisoners monologue ended.
BAM! She said it. One word.

The problem, my addiction: ego. She stated the problem. And I chose to dismiss it—and her and Dad, summarily—and the strained relationship began.

And I dismissed her statement. That is, until that January, 2002 Dear-John meeting at Streetlight Technology, 19 years later. Arguably, 19th century American writer, William Cullen Bryant, tackled it best: “Truth, crushed to the earth, shall rise again.”
The Oakwood Effect

Although I never attended Oakwood, the alma mater of both my mother and my wife Elaine, its motto, "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve," Krazy-Glued itself to me three times in addition to Mom’s 1973 assertion:

1. As the College’s PR director, 1998–2001;
2. As the now-University’s PR director, 2011–2013; and later
3. As its marketing/PR consultant, 2014–2015

…before being fired from those three assignments.

As Oakwood’s PR director, I:

- changed its street address and branding from “Oakwood Road” to “7000 Adventist Boulevard,” to match its belief system and institutional phone number;
- managed its Aeolians touring choir, to accompany such diverse musical legends as Lee Greenwood (country), Miss Kathleen Battle (classical) and Richard Smallwood (gospel); and
- created for this choir the first-ever national products’ distribution contract, college choir web site and a two-year milestone of 5500 product sales—

…before being “let go” in 2001.

In fact, while packing up my office in April 2001, college president Dr. Delbert Baker came into my office, and just sat there silently for 10 minutes. Upon exiting that Dear-John “interview,” he turned and mumbled, “You’ve got such great talent,…”

When in 2011, Dr. Leslie Pollard succeeded Baker, I accepted his invitation to return. And then came Monday morning, December 16, 2013—the last work day of the fall semester for faculty, staff and university administrators—and I was called into the President’s Office to meet personally with him.

It was five hours before the annual Oakwood Faculty-Staff Christmas Party, a time most anticipated when Christmas bonuses were distributed to university employees for jobs well done.

If campus employees and the national and local media had known about my meeting with the Oakwood president, they would have concluded that I was being summoned to receive a special Christmas bonus.

After all, during those 26 months since this college-now-university asked me to return, our three-person PR/marketing/creative services “Team PR” had branded this 2000-student school with unprecedented local, national and denominational props, most notably:

- Created and engineered the strategy and “spin” from which Oakwood won the $50,000 2013 Home Depot “Retool Your School” HBCU prize, beating out the other 66 competing HBCUs—an award it has now also won for the next three years.

Or, maybe I was being called in to be recognized finally for marketing milestones achieved during
my initial PR directorship.

Q: So why was I being called in to meet with the President?
President Pollard ended our 12-minute meeting, with polite but searing words: “Tim, on my campus, I’ve got two geniuses with problems—and you’re one of them. Get help. Now.”

Unfortunately (or fortunately), I knew of my not-so-closeted “genius with a problem” issue better than did Les Pollard, the pastor/counselor/leadership guru/author-turned-academic CEO. The Bible’s Luke 14:11 (NIV) reads, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,…”, and it eyeballed me. Again.
An un-Holy Trinity

Pollard’s Dear-John hat-tricked an un-holy trinity of similar words and sentiments:

- “Talent is not your problem” (Jim True, Streetlight Technology, 2002);
- “such a great talent” (Delbert Baker, Oakwood College, 2001); and

I was aware of my problem. Since 2002, I had:

- branded it as “ego-holism” in a handful of keynote and seminar-workshop presentations;
- chronicled my journey in an August 2003 Essence Magazine guest “Brothers” column, “I Was My Own Worst Enemy”;
- presented a then-six recovering steps road map as a 2003–2004 column series in Message Magazine, one of America’s oldest Christian publications; and

But it was Pollard’s half-loving counsel/half-professional mandate “Get help. Now” that forced me to step back and to view my problem more holistically, with larger eyes. And to step forward, and briefly seek licensed professional counseling with Dr. Calvin O. Matthews.

And then to pen this book.
What Qualifies This Author to Write This Book?

According to the U.S. Social Security Administration, for example, I worked:

- in 1977 for Burson-Marsteller, then the world’s largest public relations agency, and after our account team won a 1978 Silver Anvil Award—the Oscar of the PR industry—I was fired;
- in 1985 for Hill and Knowlton, at that time the world’s largest PR agency, and after receiving the 1986 John Hill Award, the firm’s top honor, I was again fired; and
- in 2007 for DirecTV, the Americas’ leading broadcast satellite service provider, and received numerous incentive awards. After being chosen to address its 1400 sales and marketing reps at their January 2010 annual meeting in Hollywood, California, I was fired three months later; and then, the state court’s hearing denied me unemployment benefits.

As a serial “celebrated and successful failure,” summarily, this author has:

- been fired 13 times;
- never ever received a job promotion in 39 years of employment; and
- been employed in most jobs only for a total of three years—
  1. Year one, to learn the job specs;
  2. Year two, to achieve maximum results and receive organizational awards and honors; and
  3. Year three, to get fired!

My wife, Elaine, reminds me that I am a poor and inconsistent communicator, despite having a bachelor’s degree in English.

Former co-workers, clients and business partners will say that I failed numerous times as a businessman and manager, in spite of having graduated from MBA School, with a Master’s of Science degree in business management.

But against that backdrop of notoriety and success, followed almost immediately by repeated failures, I cried out to God to rescue me from myself, and to partner with me in managing my ego addiction recovering. And that’s what qualifies tim allston to write this book on “ego-holism.”
Just What is “Egoholism”?\\n\\nTake this quick three-question quiz (trust me: you’ll pass):

**Q1: What do you call a person who consumes alcohol excessively?**
A1: An alcoholic, right?

**Q2: What do you call a person who consumes (or at least loves) chocolate excessively?**
A2: You guessed a “chocoholic,” and you’re right. 2 for 2.

**Q3: Then, what would you call persons who feed their egos excessively—either by thinking too highly of themselves (which drains others around them), or by thinking so little of themselves (which also drains the people around them)?**
A3: You and I would call him or her an “ego-holic.”

- Egoholism is described as “thinking too highly of ourselves, and thinking too little of our God, and then acting excessively upon those impulses.”
- Egoholism encompasses both persons who esteem themselves too inferiorly, as well as those who esteem themselves too highly, the latter of which condition dictionaries define as “egotism.”
- Egoholism asserts that both high- and low-esteemers drain the energies, respect and love of those around them. Correction: around us.

Egoholism “recovering” suggests that the process of moving from that draining condition (egoholism) that you and I are imposing upon ourselves and those closest to us (family, coworkers and friends), into a “new and improved” condition—i.e., a management partnership with the undefeated partner, God—will consume the rest of our lives. This egoholism recovering message’s “lifetime guarantee” says that you and I are guaranteed to be recovering for the rest of our lives.

To put it in Biblical terms:

- “Egoholism” is another, more descriptive and specific word for sin; and
- “Recovering” is another way of defining sanctification—i.e., the process of being set apart for use by God, which is the continuous work of a lifetime.

Sorry, there’s no one-and-done treatment for egoholism. But here’s the good-turned-great news: egoholism recovering offers that neither you nor I have to go it alone, anymore—why?—because neither you nor I were equipped to go it alone, in the first place.

And it’s taken me four decades to “get it.”
Taking a Deeper Dive Into Egoholism

The Apostle Paul summarized it best: Yes, I’m full of myself—after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So, if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary. Romans 7:15-16 (Message)

When the suffix “holism” or “holic” is added to a noun, it creates a word describing an addiction to that noun—such as “chocoholic,” i.e., a person addicted to chocolate. Therefore and just like chocoholic, egoholism blends two separate, distinct concepts (ego or self, and holism or addiction) into a new single word, egoholism. Additionally, egoholism brings together two models: big egos (egotism) and little egos.

- **Egotism** (big egoholism) conveys an *uber*-sized sense of self, or conceit.

For example: your “sense of self,” which dictionaries define as your “ego,” pushes you:

1. to arrive at work on or ahead of time each workday, or
2. to turn in your schoolwork assignment on or ahead of the assigned date.

Good. Very good. Commendable. But that sense of self (ego) can morph or inflate into egotism; then, it can exaggerate your and my efforts *in our own minds*, and then impose that exaggeration upon others, by words and actions of self-importance.

As a result of such exaggerations, for example, sometimes we feel (and demand) that:

1. we deserve a job promotion; or
2. even an “A” or “B” grade in school, simply because of how we perceive our efforts, and often regardless of how we perform on either the job or in the classroom. Motivational speaker Kate Halverson once remarked, “If you are all wrapped up in yourself, you are overdressed.”

- Egoholism also includes *low-esteem* (little egoholism), which characterizes one’s own feelings of disregard or a lack of consideration.

You and I are where we are because God allows or permits us to be there and to encounter challenges and circumstances, for His ultimate glory. However, in many instances, you and I look at our challenges and we assess God negatively through the prism of our circumstances. Instead, we should see our circumstances through the healing and supportive light of our God. Egoholism combines and now addresses problems of both big (super-sized) as well as little (feeling disregarded, not considered) egos.
Illustrating Egoholism

Let’s illustrate selfishness/arrogance and procrastination/time mis-management as two possible examples of your and my own egoholisms:

1. **Selfishness/arrogance**—sometimes, do you and I seek to over-promote ourselves because we believe in our self-acclaimed superiority of life experiences or exposures (big ego-holism)? Or, are we afraid that if we don’t over-promote our interests, we will go unnoticed and disregarded (little ego-holism)?

2. **Procrastination/time mis-management**—are you and I routinely late for commitments like meetings and appointments, because you and I feel too important to be punctual (big)—i.e., fit into someone else’s pre-existing and announced timetable? Or, are you and I routinely late, because we hope to slip into a meeting or appointment, and to be “invisible” and go unnoticed (little)?

Both big and little ego problems spring from feelings of inadequacy or incompleteness, and I’ve observed these egoholisms starting within me—as egoholism’s poster child. From these feelings of inadequacy or incompleteness, you and I often respond in an excessive way. We overdo it.

Now, there’s nothing wrong with feeling incomplete. This condition is not only appropriate, but it originates from God. *Intentionally.*
God’s (Intentional) Incomplete Pass

When God created you and me, He made us perfect AND with a natural inclination for partnering with Him, the Source of perfection. He made us to sense and know that, although created perfect and in His image, without Him we would be incomplete.

However, when Adam and Eve introduced sin into human existence, a sense of inadequacy and fear was added to our incompleteness—that is, incompleteness minus the divine perfection. Originally, God created our perfect selves, to be completed in Him; sin has now added the estrangement of inadequacy to our divine incompleteness.

By facing up to our inadequacy/incompleteness you and I should, then, turn to God to team with us for completeness and wholeness. Author Tim LaHaye once wrote, “Most miserable or depressed people are not conscious of the fact that their misery emanates from the God-vacuum within them.”

Mrs. Ellen G. White, a 19th century Bible commentator and co-founder of Oakwood College, said similarly:
“The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness, and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow. From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells.”


However, I have experienced repeatedly that God never fills our voids, our incompleteness, without our permission or assistance. If God were to fill our voids Himself without our involvement or permission, then we would not be free moral agents who exercise freedom and the power of choice.
Divine Calibrations

Instead, God partners with us to fill our voids, but He fills these voids in our lives only in direct proportion to our faith in Him. Therefore, egoholism surfaces when you and I attempt to fill our voids ourselves without God. When you and I do not partner with God in filling these voids collaboratively, we either supply too much of ourselves (big ego-holism) or dispense too little of ourselves (little ego-holism).

It is when we acknowledge and feel inadequate or incomplete—which are constants in our lives—that you and I should turn immediately to God, for proper balance and stability. God and only God knows the exact amounts of Himself and of ourselves to combine, for the proper calibration for each and every situation or encounter.
Too many times you and I won’t wait for God, His perfect timing, and His perfect calibrations, to manage our challenges or opportunities. Instead, however, we seek out artificial gods like people, places, possessions and activities to make us feel complete and good about ourselves.

But often, what appears to work immediately (sprints), does not work in the long run (marathons). History’s wisest and wealthiest man, King Solomon, admonished us all in Proverbs 3:5, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding” (KJV).
Recovering vs. Recovery

I use the concept and the word “recovering,” because it pinpoints your and my ego-holism challenge. The “ing” ending announces to the world (beginning with me) that this is a right-now and ongoing process. Recovering congratulates you and me for acknowledging the problem as continuous, and it celebrates those baby steps away from the poisons of egoholism. Yet, it tells us also that we are not finished products and, more importantly, that God, our Partner, is not yet finished with you and me.
Cancer, The Common Cold and—Egoholism?

Q: What’s the best way to understand egoholism?

A: Let’s view it under the microscope of two of your and my oldest enemies: cancer and the common cold.

Medical researchers tell us that each of us living beings has cancer cells embedded within our organs, from birth. Cancer cells are as natural to our being as is our daily breath. Every single one of us has cancer cells as a mainstay in our bodies. Therefore, it is accurate for you and me to declare, “You and I have cancer”—cancer cells, that is.

Since that is so, then what is meant when it is said that a certain person “has cancer”? Again, researchers inform us that when the number or amount of our cancer cells reaches an excessive level, health problems occur. At that point, it is said commonly that a person “has cancer.”
When having cancer is detected early—more exactly, when it is discovered that the cancer cells have reached an excessive level—then the medical treatments and adjustments in lifestyle are put in place, and the cancer is then managed—that is, returned to a manageable level. Ideally, the excessive cancer cells will be reduced and returned to a normal, non-dangerous level. To say it another way, the cancer is not cured or solved or even eliminated, but instead is managed. As long as you and I continue to live and grow, we will have cancer (cells within us).

While there is no exact formula to predict or to forestall persons from having an excessive amount of cancer cells, immunologists advise that a proper diet and regular exercise go a long way in staving off its onset. The same principle and practices hold true when it comes to the common cold.
That Nasty Recurring Cold

Although there’s been a lot of talk over the decades about a cure for the common cold, don’t expect it to happen in our lifetime. For one, the common cold is a communicable disease, heightened through interaction with other people. Additionally, we’re noticing more and more that the common cold is not restricted to any particular season, such as the cold winter months or the spring seasons of pollen. Instead, common colds happen at any time and often throughout the entire year.

The common cold is not season-specific and, more importantly, one is never permanently cured or is able to eliminate its existence. Instead, one must minimize its reaching an excessive level and manage it by rest, proper fluid intake, exercise and protecting oneself appropriately.

I have observed that once or even twice a year, I will be sidelined with the common cold—e.g., sinusitis, lots of sneezing and a runny nose, coughing, or a general rundown blah physical feeling. Once I take the proper precautions like:

- dress properly;
- get enough rest;
- stay consistent with exercise;
- eat the proper foods; and
- drink the right amount of liquids—water, teas and juices

…I’m able to either manage, avoid or at least minimize the onset of the common cold.

But, given the slightest entryway, the common cold will return.
Egoholisms = Common Colds = Cancers

Egoholism is just like cancer and the common cold: each of these maladies has different strains. Similarly, we each have different egoholism “strains” in us, and they’re called different things such as:

- selfishness;
- lust;
- procrastination;
- deceit;
- greed;
- pride;
- disrespect;
- racism;
- overeating;
- dishonesty;
- ageism;
- elitism;
- classism—

You get the picture? They are all inside of us, at various “cancer cell” levels below the surface. However, when confronted with certain situations (and from certain people), those egoholisms will rise to the surface excessively and become a problem on public display.

Just as we will always be susceptible to cancer and the common cold, you and I will always be an easy target for egoholisms—both from you and from “somebody else.” The only question that now remains is: what will you do as the next steps, now that you know? God and now I stand ready to show you The Main Thing.
Q: What’s The “Main Thing” of This Book?

Stephen Covey once decreed, “The Main Thing is to Keep The Main Thing The Main Thing.” God’s and my Main Thing here is to help you re-gain control of your life, by re-connecting you with an Undefeated Partner, God. Period. Class dismissed—or, should I say?—class now begins.

At a 2015 Constant Contact seminar, presenter Mike Coleman told us attendees that, according to research, the top two reasons that folks attend seminars and workshops are to learn:

1. how to lose weight; and
2. how to make more money.

Those two reasons can be distilled into one overarching goal: you and I want to learn how to re-capture control over freedoms and opportunities that we’ve lost over time.
Typically, if and when the topic of ego problems (now known as “egoholisms”) is raised, it’s addressed usually from such trained professionals as:

- medical doctors, like psychiatrists or psychologists;
- spiritual leaders, like ordained pastors or chaplains;
- health care facilitators, like clinical therapists or licensed family counselors;
- educators like professors, academic advisors or behavioral scientists; or
- maybe even lawyers. Right?

As a result, any ego problems would be addressed by these trained professionals from their detached, third-person perspectives.

That is, until now.

You and I are the persons from the opposite side of those desks. More specifically, this is the journey of Tim Allston:

- without deodorant;
- without mouthwash, toothpaste or floss; and
- without soap and hot water.

You will now be introduced to Tim Allston, equipped with only a mirror—correction: a two-way mirror.

Egoholism recovering un-masks and tells the journey from the victim’s side, which has never been published before. My qualifications?

- I’m not a doctor—instead, I’m the patient.
- I’m not a pastor—rather, I’m the sinner in the pew.
- I’m not a professor—preferably, I’m the student advisee.
- I’m not a therapist—alternately, I’m the client.
- I’m not a lawyer—unfortunately, I’m the victim and too often, I’ve also been the perpetrator.
  Yes, the criminal.
Finally…

My loving wife, Elaine, will tell you that I am not recovered! She and our daughter Morgann Danielle also will tell you that I am not out of the woods, yet.

But thank you for joining me in my escape—why?—because even though I’m not recovered and I’m not yet out of the woods, thanks to a loving God, I am finally out of the closet.

Still Recovering,

tim allston
Foreword

I am the father of a rambunctious two-year-old baby girl. She’s the center of life and activity in our home. Her energy knows no limitations and her curiosity knows no boundaries. In her development, one of the things I’ve noticed is a very healthy need to be noticed. She has the human-felt need for attention.

Several times in the course of a given day, she solicits my undivided attention by saying, “Daddy, look at me.” When singing the alphabet song, she demands my attention by saying “Look at me.” When she puts on a new dress, she confidently grabs my finger and says, “Look at me, Daddy.” When she uses her training potty correctly, with great exuberance she shouts, “Daddy, Look at me! I did it!” In the course of a given day, I hear the constant refrain, “Mommy, Daddy, look at me.” Truth be told, we often cease our current activities so that we can watch her development and applaud her activity.

And while this behavior is normal, and quite cute I might add, I have an expectation that she will grow out of it to a certain degree. My belief is that with maturity, the need to be validated so constantly will not be as pronounced. However, as I study our larger culture, I am met with the reality that our entire world is constantly screaming, “Look at me!” Egotism and narcissism are not shunned or met with scrutiny; rather, they are expected and consistently rewarded. Now more than ever, virtues such as humility and modesty are almost viewed as personality deficiencies.

We live in a world where the loud are featured, the obnoxious are rewarded, and gaudy has become the standard. We are all born with a tiny seed of ego planted in the heart. However, the larger culture waters that seed and creates the perfect climate for it to spiral out of control.

One Internet blogger stated that the term of the year in 2014 was the word “selfie.” A selfie is simply when you take pictures of yourself, using your smart phone. Go into any mall or any high school corridor and you will see young people with their arms outstretched, seeking the perfect light to take photos of themselves. With the filters on their phones, they are able to alter the color, the lighting, and add words to the picture. Once this process is complete, they post the picture on Twitter or Instagram so that the world can “like” or validate the picture. Twenty years ago when I was in high school, a guy would be ridiculed mercilessly for staring at himself in the mirror too long, let alone taking a picture of himself!

Through Internet venues like YouTube, people become self-broadcasters. No discernible talent is needed, just a camera and an unrestrained ego. There is no financial gain in doing this; getting as many “views” as possible is the currency they seek. Through the channels of social media, ego is fostered. People actually compete to grow the number of “followers” they have on Twitter, or to get more people to “like” their portraits on Instagram. Our self-importance is so distorted that on Facebook we actually have the audacity to update the world on what we are eating, wearing and watching. Through technology, we have been given the tools to make ourselves the stars of our own personal reality shows. We have developed an entire generation that has never learned to stop screaming, “Look at ME!”

The more interesting observation is that there is no credible voice to speak to this issue in our time. It reminds me of the Old Testament prophet Samuel’s early ministry, when the Bible says, “The word of the Lord was rare in those days and revelation was not widespread” (1 Samuel 3:1). During Samuel’s
early life, there was no one who could really speak to the growing leaven that corrupted souls during that time. There was no one to speak to the outwardly harmless evil that emerged in that generation. As a result, the nation suffered major calamity.

I see in our time an equally great evil on the horizon. As humanity’s yearning for spotlight grows more insatiable, and narcissism becomes less and less offensive, we need someone to address the issue. I thank God that for this current generation God has raised up my brother, Tim Allston, to address the matter at hand. He approaches the issue of ego management in this book not as a high-minded perch sitter free from struggle, but through the revelation given to him by God to minister out of his personal pain and affliction. He is the case study, not someone else. As one still recovering he does not move alone in victory, but he reaches back, grabbing us and equipping us for a journey toward triumph.

I have had the privilege of having a side-seat view of Tim’s spiritual evolution. I’ve gone from being a student worker for his wife Elaine at Oakwood College in 1998, to being a casual acquaintance, and for the last five years serving as his senior pastor and brother in Christ. As you’ll see in his book, he is uniquely qualified to tell this story. The qualifications that I reference have nothing to do with education or work experience, but affliction. Pain has been his teacher, suffering his tutor, and prolonged discomfort has mentored him to rightly address the culture in our time.

This book is not for those who want to be entertained. It is not for those who feel like they need to make minor adjustments in life. It is not for those who are reading leisurely. It is for those who are willing to look at their souls in the harshest light. It is for truth-seekers who are willing to be personally challenged, inwardly confronted and spiritually indicted. These 7 steps to ego management are practical, portable and powerful. There are no gimmicks in play here. God uses Tim to share plain truth, using plain language to plain folk.

I invite you to take the plunge. I encourage you to go deep. Beneath the surface things may be murky, but you will emerge with a profound sense of freedom as God uses Tim to speak to the evil of our time.

Debleaire K. Snell, Senior Pastor
First Seventh-day Adventist Church
Huntsville, Alabama USA (2015)
Dedication: Who’s The Primary Audience?

Q1: What is the #1 asset of each and every organization—whether at the workplace or in the homeplace?

MBA School taught us that there are three *can’t-do-without* resources:

- Fiscal resources (monies);
- Physical resources (buildings and facilities which, thanks to the Internet, are decreasing in importance); but the most important resources are
- Human resources (you and me).

Q2: Who, then, is the most important human asset in every organization? Hint: it’s not the top dog or CEO, however titled.

A: Your organization’s #1 asset are your “silver medalists”—i.e., those persons *perceived* to be in the number two position(s)—whether professionally or personally:

- Professionally, silver medalists have such first-word designations in their titles as “vice,” “assistant,” “associate,” “deputy” and sometime even “second.” In some organizations, a silver medalist can be titled “chief operating officer”; in academe, “provost” is one of their labels; and
- Personally, on the home front, silver medalists generally are called “wife” and/or “second” or “middle” child; in a single-parent household, that silver medalist typically is the first-born child.

Silver medalists serve as the traffic cops and mediators between the top and the bottom levels of their organizations—i.e., the big egos and the little egos, respectively. They possess many of the qualities and qualifications of the top person, as well as the experiences and exposures of the organization’s lower rungs. They become effective couriers from the top to the bottom, and vice versa—*why?*—because silver medalists are qualified in each of those realms.

And yet, they are little acknowledged, least schooled and most maligned. While there are numerous training programs and courses for top leadership, there’s virtual silence about acknowledging, affirming and equipping silver medalists.

Q: Are you *perceived* to be in a number two position in your organization?

A: *Yes?* Then, you are the “Dedicatee,” the primary persons targeted for this message.
Acknowledgments

“One is too insignificant a number to achieve greatness.”
Dr. John C. Maxwell

This egoholism recovering message results from my 24/7/366 pillars:

- My loving wife, Elaine Hamilton Allston, whose take-no-prisoners criticisms, when married to God’s responses in me, sculpted what you’re now (and will soon be) reading; and
- Our daughter, Morgann Danielle Allston, whom I hope and pray will never have to pen such a spiritual riches-to-rags-to-riches book!

Also, the journey of this message was egged on by “people mileposts,” namely:

- Pastor Steve Norman (November 1998) who foretold me that I would one day write and self-publish a book!
- Professional speaking industry coach/consultant Juanell Teague and her then-scribe, Heather Ranker, (January 2002) who midwifed this message’s birth;
- College schoolmates Deborah Long-Chambers, Dr. Joan Hayes-Anderson, Joyce Putman and Thomas “Dr. T” Law (2002) who, when I introduced the book topic to them, each said separately but in unison, “Oh yeah; you’re the right one to write on this topic!”
- Anne Burkett and the Junior League of Huntsville (March 2002), who paused their Apple Annie planning session and gave this unpolished message and messenger its first-ever platform;
- Law professor Sherman and Mrs. Yvonne (Gordon) Rogers (March 2002), whose “attaboy” exhumed my spirit repeatedly throughout this 14-year journey, and finally “wood-shedded” me (October 1, 2016) to publish in 30 days!
- Pastor Leon “101” Bryant, Sr. (March 2002), who offered the coined the concept and phrase, “Egoholism is the Mother of all Addictions”;
- Essence Magazine editor-in-chief Susan L. Taylor (March 2002) and “Brothers” column editor Patricia Hinds (August 2003), who offered me an “I Was My Own Worst Enemy” guest submission opportunity;
- Veterans Administration Medical Center clinical social worker and addictionologist Dr. Sadie (Lumpkin) Sheafe (May 2002), who authenticated egoholism as an addiction;
- Mentor/seminar-workshop co-presenter Mike “Batman” Sales (October 2002), who never gave up on this “Robin”;
- Alabama A&M University’s then-Research & Development VP Dr. Dorothy Huston (December 2002), for hosting my first seminar-workshop presentation, “Welcome To The Twin Cities of Egos”;
Message Magazine then-editor Dr. Ron Smith (January 2003), who afforded this message a two-year run in its “Voices In The Wind” column;

Interview transcribers Mary Edna Shields and Tonya Allston Smith (2003);

University of Alabama/Huntsville’s Erin Reid (2003), for designing the two-headed self-portrait stick man;

Huntsville Times’ business page columnist Shannon Belew and Speakin’ Out News editor William D. Smothers (September 2003), and Richard Scrushy, host of Birmingham’s “Viewpoint” TV show (May 2004), for placing early media interviews;

Subsequent keynote or seminar-workshop presentations hosted by Sarah Savage (Youth Leadership Huntsville, January 2003); George Bartholemew (Oakwood College Youth Motivation Task Force, September 2003); Kristine Harding (Jones & Herrin Architects, 2004); Dr. Norman Miles (Lake Region Conference Workers’ Meeting, February 2004); Alton Conwell (Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities, April 2003); Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity (greater Huntsville chapters’ Founder’s Day Observance, December 2003); Dr. Cherryl Galley (Psychology Class, May 2004); Dr. Freddy Davy (Hampton University’s Honors College Banquet, January 2003); National Hampton Alumni Association (North Carolina Region Conference, March 2004); Antonio McGinnis (First SDA Church Men’s Day Service, September 2004); and Emmanuel Chester (New Life SDA Church Men’s Ministry Week of Prayer, 2016);

Earlier manuscript drafts’ critical readers Kenny Anderson (2004), and Drs. James and Violet Gilbert (2007);

Dr. Kay Kuzma (2007), whose 2007 fitforever daily devotional book featured my “I’m A Recovering Egoholic” submission;

Pastor/confidante Benjamin Jones, Jr. (2010), who advised me after failed and premature self-publishing attempts, “Tim: God always prepares the minister, before the ministry”; and

Jerry Ross (2015) for the cover design.

And as the final touch, the “committee of book murderers” (October 2016), who lacerated copy down to these 8,150 words, and like running water, they located every crack and crevice in this manuscript; and then mandated, “Fix it, before you attach my name to this!” Those assassins were:

- English professor/author Dr. Paula C. Barnes;
- Communication professor/author Patti T. Conwell;
- Retired publicist/mentor Frank C. Gihan,
- Pastor/author Dr. Roland J. Hill; and
- Retired English professor/author Dr. Althea L. McMillan.

Finally but actually first (“In the beginning, God…”), I thank you, God, for being the patient, enduring and loving Book-ends of this message and also my life.

Thank you, all.

Editor’s Note: This “Introduction to Ego-holism Recovering” is the free downloadable ebook, and the kinda Save-The-Date icebreaker to launch 7 Steps to Manage Ego Problems: The How-To Guide
for “Somebody Else.” These seven egoholism recovering steps will be presented in a unique series of eight BookCards.

**Afterword: What’s A BookCard?**

Knowing how much people still love to read yet feel time- and attention-crunched to do so, mentors Mike Sales and Jerry Ross teamed with me to create this BookCard model. Retired Procter & Gamble consumer marketing researcher Mike offered that folks still love to read, but are handcuffed by time and attention-span constraints. Jerry, a graphic designer with strong corporate and nonprofit marketing expertise, determined that reading opportunities needed to be designed, to fit aesthetically within people’s existing comfort zones. As the trio’s wordsmith, I taglined the BookCard therefore as “The Depth of A Book/The Brevity of A Specialty Greeting Card.”

Hence, a BookCard is a pocket-sized 20-30 page content-heavy and graphically-attractive Book, presented in a specialty greeting Card-formatted combo. Designed for a one-sitting read, a BookCard is ideal for that on-the-go person needing a quick-fix of meaningful content in a “fast-food container”—first electronically, and later in print.
The BookCards in This Series, and Your *Right-Now* Benefits

This *7 Steps* BookCard series charts a step-by-step recovering plan for you and me, as we take another and more penetrating look at our surroundings. Here, from current and recent newsmakers, you will learn:
Recovering Step #1: To Change Your Lanes Effectively, Glance Back Before Driving Forward.

- how to encourage others to ask and answer the two most powerful questions to improve their lives, beginning right now; and
- why New England Patriots’ quarterback, Tom Brady, has become a new and different role model.
Recovering Step #2: Uncover More Buried Treasures The Deeper You Plunge Below Your Surface.

Discover:

- what the Italian sculptor Michelangelo uncovered when creating his masterpiece, *David*, and how that secret can help others around you now in recovering;
- which recovering steps could have prevented the triumphant-turned-tragic legacy of music icon Michael Jackson; and
- how, conversely, those same recovering steps for the tragedy-turned-triumph saga of former South Carolina Governor and former First Lady Jenny Sanford become a model for each of us;
BookCard 3, Happy New Ears!

Recovering Step #3: Fast-forward Your Success Through “Homework Listening.” Find out:

- why you (and I) are such poor listeners, why it’s not really our fault, and how to become better, more active listeners in three steps.
BookCard 4, Ladies and Gentlemen: Re-Start your Engines

Recovering Step #4: Re-start Your Engine and Give Your Life-Journey Better Mileage. It will reveal:

- why this is not a self-help book.
Recovering Step #5: Let Your Failures Jump-Start Your Successes. Investigate:

- “From Barack-bottom to The White House”—how he rose from a crushing defeat in 2000, to become 44th U.S. President in 2008, once he applied these recovering steps;
Recovering Step #6: Your Greatest Healings Come out of Your Revealing. Determine:

- how and when Hillary Rodham Clinton won her own first campaign—even before the U.S. Senate and the U.S. presidency—with her simple 22-word “approved” message;
- where the legacy of the late former First Lady Betty Ford is still being felt today; and
- how pro basketball legends Kobe Bryant, Earl “the Pearl” Monroe and Magic Johnson, for example, help to illustrate characteristics of egoholism and recovering.
What Happened to “Dr. Tim Allston”?
Recovering Step #7: Now That You Know... Go, Elevate and Grow! Ask yourself:

- what’s now the next appropriate step in my recovering journey?
“Reading maketh a full man; and writing an axact man.” Francis Bacon

In addition to the multiple Holy Bible versions used (namely, the KJV, NKJV, NLT, The Message, Maxwell Leadership, Life Recovery, the Voice, etc.), the following books provided important “reading mileposts” on this journey:


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