



#37 ALTER EGO EXERCISE

What does the support group mean to us?

Are we really listening to each other as we describe what our problems might be?

Do we actually know what we want?

Do we say what we think others want to hear?

The Alter Ego exercise is designed to help us all look more deeply for what is really going on with ourselves to keep our problems alive when we want to stop them.

After completing the following exercises have a group member talk about a problem that is standing in the way of their success. The other group members act as alter egos stating what they think might really be a thought or feeling that prevents the person from changing...for example:

Dad confronts 16 year old daughter for going to a kegger party:

Dad: "What were you thinking? We've raised you better than that!"

Daughter responds: "Dad, everybody goes to these parties...don't be so old school!"

(An ALTER EGO is another voice that challenges the thinking of the main thoughts a person has about something. In many cases this other "voice" is more truthful, more rational and more willing to take ownership for consequences of bad choices.)

Alter ego 1: "Look, I'm not cool and all the cool people go to these parties...This is my chance...I can't just not go!"

Alter Ego 2: "Everybody will know what a loser I am if I don't go."

Alter ego 3: "My self-esteem is already shattered...being hated because they think I think I'm better than they are would finish me off."

Alter ego 4: "I'm not strong enough to go against what my friends want me to do."

Note: (It may help to act these scenes out to get better thoughts from the alter egos.)

A) Mom confronts son for getting cinch notices sent home: "Mike, Why did you get a bad progress report in Science class? You always liked Science!"

Mike: "I don't know...I guess I'm just lazy?"

Alter ego 1:

Alter ego 2:

Alter ego 3:

Alter ego 4:

B) Friend is pissed off about a buddy not standing up for them to a teacher:

Amy: “Jennifer, I thought we were tight...why did you do me like that? Now she knows I cheated from you on that quiz.” **Jennifer:** “Look Amy; what did you expect me to do? I don’t understand you anymore.”

Alter ego 1:

Alter ego 2:

Alter ego 3:

Alter ego 4:

C) Boss catches an employee in a lie: “Jim, you told me you couldn’t work last night because of being needed at home and then my assistant manager sees you at the mall with your girlfriend. What’s going on?”

Jim: “I knew you wouldn’t let me off if I asked so I just lied”.

Alter ego 1:

Alter ego 2:

Alter ego 3:

Alter ego 4:

D) Procrastination: Teacher “Why should I give you more time than everyone else to complete your term paper?”

Alec: “Because I’ve got a lot of work this week...I can’t possibly do it all!”

Alter ego 1:

Alter ego 2:

Alter ego 3:

Alter ego 4:

E) Attitude and problems with authority: **Coach:** OK That's it...That outburst just put you on the bench for the rest of the game!"

Spike: "I'm so mad at you I'd like to kick you ass right now...take this stupid team and shove it! I'm out!!"

Alter ego 1:

Alter ego 2:

Alter ego 3:

Alter ego 4:

Some random thoughts about the alter ego:

If people are having trouble with this exercise it can be the result of seldom questioning themselves about anything. It's hard to question something that we don't own! For example: I might think "**I don't want to do this stupid volunteer work!**"

An alter ego might ask: "Are you afraid that you don't have anything to offer?" or "So you have always been able to con your way out of this kind of thing in the past." or "What good would one little act of kindness do in such a messed up world?" or "What if you try your hardest and it still doesn't turn out well?"

In other words "What if the problem isn't because of what someone else has done but because of what you have (or haven't) done?" Could you cope with that?