

I'm Sick of Ego by Dr. Rosalie de Rosset

I've seen it happen a hundred times, to myself and to other people. We hesitantly go up to a well-known, and sometimes not so well-known Christian speaker, teacher, or performer wanting to just say a word, have a moment of contact. The speaker, teacher, or performer looks up and then handles the nobody who wants to talk to him or her brusquely or looks away to talk to someone more important. I can still remember my contacts, first with a singer I admired, someone whose music I had listened to for hours for spiritual comfort and aesthetic refuge; then, second my attempted connection with a conference speaker. On both occasions, the person looked at me coldly, shook my hand quickly and looked away as though he had been irritated by my attention. I am now solidly resistant to meeting anyone well-known, especially if I have been deeply moved by something he or she has said. I don't want to know that he or she could care less about little old me. Even in the small sphere of influence that I have because I speak several times a year, I'm always surprised when someone comes up to me hesitantly, apologetically, almost afraid and asks if she can talk to me...suggesting that I probably wouldn't want to, when, in fact, that is the point...that is the calling...to talk to that person.

Any degree of fame, even the tiniest little bit, seems to infect the average person, let alone Christian. If someone has been a seminar leader or speaker, written anything that gets published, been a consultant for any kind of organization, known anyone famous, it just has a tendency to go to that individual's head. Self-importance may just be the spiritual swine flu of the day.

In the recently deceased J. D. Salinger's well-known novel called *Franny and Zooey*, Franny Glass, a beautiful, intelligent, and honest college student, and member of a well-known Jewish family, is having a nervous breakdown. She has found life, many other people, and herself to be empty. Everywhere she goes, she clutches a book containing the Jesus prayer. The prayer reads, "*Lord, have mercy on me, Jesus, have mercy on me.*" She says impassionedly to her boyfriend: "*I'm just sick of ego, ego, ego. My own and everybody else's. I'm sick of everybody that wants to get somewhere, do something distinguished and all, be somebody interesting. It's disgusting—it is, it is. I don't care what anybody says... I'm sick of not having the courage to be an absolute nobody. I'm sick of myself and everybody else that wants to make some kind of a splash.*" (39-40)

Franny is longing for herself and for the world around her to be less self-absorbed; she longs for simplicity and kindness, for what Henri Nouwen calls **downward mobility**. What Franny is tired of is pride, her own and everyone else's.

C.S. Lewis wrote that *Pride is the cause of the first sin—...as long as you are proud you cannot know God*. Or in the words of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

I guess that's another way of saying many of us need to get over ourselves. Just my thoughts today. For Prime Time America/ Moody Radio, this is Rosalie de Rosset