

OVERCOME GREED AND SELFISHNESS



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OVERCOMING GREED AND SELFISHNESS

Everybody is out to be better than everyone else. They don't care if they step on someone else in the process. The focus is merely on winning and screw everyone else. Does this sound familiar?

What is so difficult about respecting others around you, sharing and not being selfish? There must be something really difficult about being a decent human being these days – as it seems the majority of people just care about themselves. Here are some examples;

- In traffic people actually push in front of you to get ahead by two cars. No one lets you in or is even aware of the cars around them.
- In public transport men don't offer their seats to women or the elderly?
- In business you sell your soul for bottom line profits. People don't matter anymore, profit does. Regardless of whom you step on in the process.
- In neighbourhoods, no one cares if your alarm has gone off or if you are being robbed – just don't involve me.
- We are all best of mates with everyone around us, especially our social circle. But let just one of these people go through a tough patch, need a place to stay, or emotional support – and suddenly you are too busy, or have your own demons.
- People need a license to drive a car and a qualification to do a job, but any idiot can have 10 children, abuse them and be a drunk on top of it? Oh, and this same person supports all the 'political correct' issues that favour his/her lifestyle.
- And what about the person in front of you in the supermarket at the cashier. They hold up the line because they forgot something and you have to stand and wait for them to finish another shop. Then their credit

card doesn't go through. Then they search for 15 minutes for small change and recount it all. Plus they're ugly!

I don't know about you, but I am getting tired of people who only think of themselves. I'm sure much research has been done and can only assume much frustration has resulted trying to figure out why people are greedy and selfish. They say that it is inherent in all of us. I strongly disagree with this school of thought and firmly believe that we ALL possess gentleness, love and caring – it's just that society and the media has conditioned people to be who they are today. Each of us needs to seriously do some introspection and find that beautiful caring person within ourselves again!

It really isn't difficult, and most of the time we just need guidance to get back onto the path of kindness again. Of course some people claim that in the cut-throat society we live in today, it's not called greed – it's called 'survival'. I hear you... but have we as a society really stooped that low? All it takes is for one person to show some respect to the next to make that person's day. Let the snow ball effect grow and let us all find that common decency again.

Here are some tips;

1. Become aware. Most of the time I find that people are not even aware anymore that they are selfish. They are so caught up in their own world that they do not even realise they are displaying anti-social behavior. Consider this, have you ever had a slow driver in front of you that is completely unaware you are behind them? It doesn't help you getting annoyed with that person, as they are not even aware of you. On the other hand, that person is so caught up in their own world that they are not aware of you. This is why we need to start 'looking around' us. Who are the people/cars in our vicinity? Are we aware of their behaviour and where they are going? It's also known as LIVING IN THE MOMENT.

My best is at a busy parking lot. All spaces are taken and you see someone going back to their car. Politely you wait, indicate that you want to turn in, yet this lady who has just returned to her car, spends 10 minutes looking for the car key, then adjusts her seat, rummages through her handbag looking for goodness knows what. Then she re-applies her make-up, makes a phone call – all while you are politely waiting for her to pull out so that you can have a parking. Sound familiar? It all starts with small things such as this. You need to become aware and realise that there are other people around you too. Stop just living in your own world. The next time you return to your car – LOOK AROUND YOU and see if there are other people waiting for your parking spot.

2. Above is just one example of many. Another habit you need to develop is to spend some time with yourself and practice self-reflection. In fact you should do this at least once every fortnight and be totally honest with yourself. Analyze the things you do for others and ask yourself whether you seek recognition for all your deeds. If you do, consider giving to a charity anonymously so that no one knows it was you. That will be a shock to your ego, but do you much good. Of course some people argue that the internal pleasure of 'feeling important' is lost, and that as human we do need to have that feeling of accomplishment. Absolutely, I couldn't agree more – however, when you give anonymously, I have always felt that the power is so much stronger as ONLY YOU know what you did and you are in ABSOLUTE control – sorry – but nothing beats that!
3. Maybe your greed stems from wanting too much attention from friends, social circle and family. Sit down and think of the last time you were together as a group. Can you remember what everyone else spoke about? Can you remember the problems and issues they discussed? If

not, could it be that you were hogging the conversation and didn't give anyone else a chance to talk? You see, greed isn't always about materialistic things and money – it can also be about demanding too much time and attention from others. Hence that great saying by an unknown author.... "We have two ears and only one mouth so that we hear twice as much as we say!"

4. Yes I can hear you thinking to yourself that this is way too difficult to do on your own. No it's not – it's called taking responsibility for your own life and decisions and to stop blaming your parents, the teacher, the priest or the government for your situation. In fact an easy way to start this self-reflection is to ask a genuine friend to help you and to tell you when they see you displaying this behaviour. You could of course also find a mentor that embodies caring and ask them to guide you. If you have any issues with what I am saying, ask yourself this question, "How do you want to be remembered one day? What do you want people to say about you when you dead and gone?" These can be very powerful words and a huge motivating factor in changing your life for the better.

5. How does greed affect the world? Maybe you believe that you are gentle, caring and don't have a greedy bone in your body. Watch the news and read the newspaper for one week only. Everything you see, ask yourself whether that event was based on greed, selfishness or kindness. Odds are 99.9% of everything is a result of selfish behaviour. Yes there are always 2 sides to a story and it always starts with greed on the side of one party. Start thinking about these events and try analyse where the greed started. This simple awareness starts developing your insight and suddenly when you see where all the greed originates from, you are in a better position to start changing things when you notice greed arising.

6. Name me one happy greedy person? Do you know any? Greed and selfishness may get you in the cue first, ahead of the car behind you – but does it really satisfy that internal desire to be content and happy? Anyone can get ahead by treading on others that takes no intelligence, decency or thoughtfulness. And when you have reached that 'greed goal' does everyone around you respect you? NO! From childhood I was always taught that it is way better to be respected.

7. Stop interrupting others! For me that must be one of the most difficult things to do. I don't mean to be disrespectful or selfish when I interrupt someone else – it's just that I feel I have something positive to contribute. Does this sound familiar? That's me through and through. A while back I joined a Master Mind group with a few fellow speaker friends. The first thing that came up is that we were all constantly interrupting each other – after all that's who we were – speakers who advised and helped others. We thought on our feet – we shared! Ha, ha, soon we learnt that we could never help each other if we kept interrupting. Eventually we came to an agreement that the person that speaks, speaks and only when they are finished, do they give the rest of us permission to start responding. I never once thought that it could be so difficult to keep quiet for so long! Guess what – we have all learnt to listen! By listening you are showing respect, and also understanding the needs of the other person. Hence when you do answer, you tend to give much more practical and concise advice that actually helps.

8. Become a decent human being by not always forcing your way. Today only the toughest survive. It's eat, or be eaten! What a sad philosophy to live your life by. How about trying to not be forceful and not constantly push your views. How about listening to what the other person has to say? Instead of looming over meek, sit back and open your arms and ask

them in a gentle way to share their views, instead of pushing them into a corner!

9. Give everyone the same chance in life. Early on in my life I learn an important lesson about people. I was traveling around the world and constantly working with people from many cultures at any given time. Guess what? I had my preconceptions about people – this was how society had brought me up. Weirdly enough though as I started working closely together with different people I started learning that we actually all have the same feelings and emotions! We all have the same basic human needs! Did you know that a black man actually also needs to eat, just as a Chinese woman needs to eat? Did you realise that a Muslim family also has a value system, just as a Christian family has? Just asking, as it seems many people don't get this – and hence selfish misconceptions followed by greedy disrespectful behaviour take over!
10. Look people in the eyes! It is plain rude to look someone up and down when introduced to them the first time! It is even more selfish not to make an effort to remember their name. We joke, but how often does a man meet a pretty girl, but can't even remember the color of her eyes. He can remember many other physical features, but never the color of her eyes. That's the reality of the society we live in today! STOP! Look into a person's eyes and listen when they tell you their name. Repeat it a few times until you have it. The minimum respect you can give another human being is to make an effort to remember their name!
11. In a similar vein, why must ever conversation be about you? If people want to know something about you – they will ask! Why don't you listen to how they feel for a change? In sales one of the most basic rules is that you should listen to what your customer wants. Most salesmen are so

busy trying to pitch the product they have to sell, that they never listen to their customer's needs, and hence wonder why their sales have dropped. How big is your social circle? Do you have many friends? If not, have you ever considered that it could be because you don't really know anything about the other people around you? That the conversation is always about you. Why would anyone want to be friends with someone who only cares about them self? And when you do let them speak – DON'T look around the room and appear dis-interested. Ask genuine questions about things you genuinely want to know!

12. I have a rule in my life, regardless of who you are, where you come from or what your social standing is in society – everyone I meet, I treat in exactly the same manner. I give every new person that enters my life a clean sheet of paper without any marks on it. Do you do the same? It's amazing when you don't judge others. It's even more amazing when you give to strangers and don't behave selfishly. In fact the friends I have around the world today are mainly because of this pure acceptance of people I meet. Learn to do the same.

13. Be friendly! As I write this section I still feel terrible about my behaviour a few days ago. I had a hawker ring my doorbell. But he didn't ring it once; he rang it constantly, over and over again and for about 5 minutes. I was busy working on one of my books and in deep concentration. I didn't have a problem with him ringing the bell; it was the mere fact that he rang it constantly. Well, I ran upstairs and gave him more than an earful. I think the entire neighbourhood heard me. Believe me, he was NEVER going to do that ever again! In fact I couldn't believe that anybody could be so rude and insensitive.

Yes, he was rude and no he should not have rung my door bell constantly

for 5 minutes. However, should I have reacted to his behaviour the way I did? In hindsight – DEFINITELY NOT! I basically fought rude behaviour with rude behaviour. Although he learnt his lesson, I didn't make a better person of him through my reaction. If anything I fuelled aggression within him. The correct procedure would have been to calmly and clearly explain to him that his behaviour was wrong. Whether it would have sunk in or not is not the issue at hand. Friendliness on my part would have gone a lot further than the aggression. So yes, I too make those mistakes. We are all human! However, we also need to be human enough to acknowledge when we are wrong, think about our response and plan not to repeat that behaviour again.

14. I cringe when I see people disrespect another person's culture. That is a typical example of selfishness. When I do point out the insult, the accused always retort that they didn't know. Again, my travels have taught me that if I am going to another country, it is my duty to learn about that culture and country. I am a guest there. I should respect their belief system and their way of doing things. I have no right to force my beliefs, and especially my ignorance of their beliefs onto them as insults. Just imagine if we all did our homework and respected everyone around us for who they are? How often have you yourself not asked the question why other people don't respect you for who you are? How can they if you are not prepared to do it wither?

15. I love humor and I laugh loudly. If I am in a room – you will know it. I take over without meaning to do so! Recently I was told that loud laughter is a sign of arrogance or insecurity! Imagine my shock! I am a fun guy! I teach and help others be positive. I believe in laughter and having fun. How can I be arrogant or selfish? Not something I liked to hear. However, when I am in a public environment I need to understand that not everyone is as

loud as I am. They may feel uncomfortable, or even irritated by my outbursts of laughter. I need to respect their views. I always thought I was charming and outgoing! Outgoing maybe, but charming... NO! A charming person doesn't force their opinion on others. Laughing out loudly can happen, but not every laugh. I had to learn that being polite and respectful of others means that I too need to enjoy my laugh, but that I can do it with being overly loud!

16. Maybe it's an age thing, but the older I get I realise more and more that my purpose on this earth must have meaning. Walking over others and leaving them worse off cannot possibly be the purpose of my life, nor of anyone else's. If anything, the greed we see in others should be a warning and lesson to all of us that we need to start caring for and respecting those around us.

17. Part of being human is not knowing what to do in every situation. With age come wisdom, but that still doesn't mean one has the answers to everything. There may well be a situation where you want to react to a certain behaviour, or you have behaved in a certain way, yet are not sure whether this was selfish, or greedy. I always believe that 'when in doubt' watch others! Learn from caring people! Look how they behave and what they do in certain situations. Learn through association! And for those times that you are not sure about your own actions – ask those you respect for their opinions. You'll be amazed what you can learn.

18. Part of being a decent human being is understanding etiquette! Especially when it comes to greeting a stranger and shaking hands. Selfish behaviour is not always done on purpose. Ignorance can be seen as selfish and greedy behaviour too! Take a simple situation such as shaking hands in a western context. Younger people should wait for the

older person to extend their hand first! This means that older people should also be aware of this too. Failing to do so will make the younger person feel rejected. Ladies, you are expected to extend your hand first. No gentleman will extend his hand first. He will wait for you to do so. If you don't you will appear to be rude. Similarly, no man should extend his hand first – you will come across as arrogant with a lack of refinement to the woman.

19. Be generous with your time and start looking for opportunities (whether at work or at home) where you can help somebody else. Any hey! It's NOT always about money! The most precious asset we all have as humans is our TIME. I have zero tolerance for people that say they have no time to help others. They would rather write a cheque! That's greedy! By spending time with a cause or people in need, you start understanding them, you start connecting and you start comprehending the meaning behind what you are doing. That is when you start understanding the true meaning of giving and caring. Look at it like this; it's much easier to pay someone to clean up after your elderly incontinent parents. After all, you are giving that person a job opportunity. Yea right, but it's still selfish! It's much more sincere and humble to clean up yourself and give back and care for that parent that brought you into this world and cleaned up your mess as a baby! Just look at the society we live in today. It's much easier to palm parents off into an old age home and spend the monthly fee to keep them there, than to have them stay with you. Selfishness has already broken apart families and family unity. It's not going to change unless you do something about it!

20. Practice awareness! Take note of everything around you. Start with noticing one thing only. Then 10 minutes later see if you can visualize and remember that one thing. It will take you a while to become

comfortable with this. Once you do, try notice 2 things around and so you build it up. Soon you will start noticing people and behaviour you never saw before. In this way you will become aware of other people's needs around you and your behaviour will move taking to giving.

21. Don't argue! It's really as easy as that. You will find that selfish greedy people need to have everything their way – hence they argue and fight way more than other people in order to get their way. Hence one of the best ways to focus on caring is to withdraw yourself from any argument or fight. Consciously make a point of not arguing with people. It's not easy. But the more you practice – the easier it gets.

22. Acknowledge and accept that all of us (That's YOU and ME!) have been conditioned by the media (TV/Newspapers/Corporates) to be selfish, greedy and only look after our own needs. That is the only way for capitalism to survive. You just need to understand this. Once you accept this fact, only then can you make a decision to do something about it and apply all the points shared here. Make that decision now and start changing your life to one of caring for those around you.

You may believe that you need to have a bigger car, a bigger house, be ahead in the traffic, win a monopoly and always be a clear fore-runner in everything you do. Maybe you are so insecure within yourself that this is what drives you. Guess what – as much as you want to believe that this defines your success and happiness – it doesn't!

Let me finally hit the nail home with a simplistic example. Remember when you fell in love? Think back of that initial feeling. What did you want to do? You wanted to make the person you loved feel special! You want to stroke them. You wanted to hug them. You wanted to buy them things. You wanted to spoil

them. You sacrificed in order to give them pleasure. In fact all you wanted to do was give, give and give some more in order to make them realise how much you loved them. When they responded in kind to your actions, what did you do? Mmm... give some more? Absolutely! Did you also notice that you didn't really expect anything in return? Simply the act of giving and making that person you loved feel special, was enough!

So why can't you live your everyday life like that. Love and care for everyone around you. Yes, we can all change the world... it starts with YOU!

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Wolfgang Riebe is a unique international keynote speaker on strategic magic who has inspired millions of people worldwide. He is a best-selling author with appearances in over 150 countries - from Hollywood to Singapore. Star of numerous television shows and many of his own prime time TV series, coupled with 27 years experience in the speaking, service and entertainment industry, make him a world leader in his field.

In 2012 the National Speakers Association (NSA) awarded Wolfgang the CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) designation, which is the highest award given to any professional speaker in the speaking world. This designation is currently only held by less than 800 professional speakers globally.

“Greatness in a Speaker, is defined by passion, humility, sincerity and personal experience, coupled with his ability to capture, communicate and entertain his audience, while still sharing practical, sustainable and immediately implementable life skills which have a positive effect on all present.” Wolfgang Riebe

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