

# Chronicle *Jim Wormington*

## Taming the Ego Within

*Even modest writers have their infamous writers' egos hidden somewhere. Make sure yours is a cheerleader, not the roadblock of your career.*

**C**all him Ego. An often detestable little booger that looks—well, just like me. He's constantly leaping up and down like some sugar-buzzed ADD poster child, waving his little arms, red-faced, shouting, "Look at me!"

He sees himself driving a purple Jaguar, running fashionably late for another book signing at Borders.

Picture the crowd gathered at the front door. Envious computer geeks are huddled together sipping Slurpees. Young women (not a dud in the lot) are bobbing up and down like they are about to get a glimpse of their favorite Backstreet Boy. Let's not leave out the sophisticated intellectual types, busily stirring their Starbucks coffees. They all want Ego's autograph on their copies of his latest best seller. And

supermodel girlfriend.

Later, in the billiard room, Jeeves brings in the phone.

"I'm afraid it's Mr. Spielberg again, sir," he says in his most respectful British baritone. Ego puts the handset to his ear.

"Steve, Steve, Steve," Ego says, shaking his head. "Of course you can do the movie. You know you have first dibs. Always, old boy. Always."

Yes, nearly every struggling writer has some version of this nasty fellow slithering about in the fog of his or her less-noble subconscious. Ego wants to be recognized, wants fame and fortune, wants to see every story become a blockbuster movie.

Before we completely condemn him, let's acknowledge that the creature isn't all bad; in fact, a bit of him is necessary. A

can be our ally.

Still, we must keep him in check, feed him a steady diet of reality. Tame him. There are very few Stephen Kings, John Grishams or Anne Rices. That level of commercial success in writing is rare. (Not impossible, mind you, but rare.) First seek publication, then worry about a paycheck.

Personally, I have Ego cuffed in the basement. I check in with him now and then, keeping him alive on Slim-Fast and Evian, but I won't give him free reign.

I try to keep other energies in the captain's chair: Fascination, Imagination, Passion, Faith, Humor, Doubt, Hope. These are far better guides, better Muses, than Ego.

I am not saying, "Dispense with dreams." Never. Just begin with modest goals. Know that Ego will pop up and distract you from the task of writing well.

Just bop him on the head. And get back to writing. **WD**

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who could blame them? Ego is the coolest.

After the grueling session at Borders, it's back to the mansion (which his neighbors affectionately call "the museum of conspicuous consumption"). Perhaps there is time for a quick tennis match on the backyard court with his latest

writer (one that wants to be published, anyway) must believe that at least some of the inner voices playing in his or her head might interest other souls. We can't be trembling and apologetic about our work. We can't be so afraid of rejection that we never submit. So, a measure of Ego

Jim Wormington has published work in Elgin Community College's literary magazine, *The Spire*, and in the *Orange County Register*. He has written three award-winning essays.

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