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THE **E**-WORD

Ego, Enlightenment & Other Essentials

By Cate Montana

With Donald Trump's election, decades of progressive thinking and legislation are going up in smoke. Millions of people want to know, "Why is this happening?" And *The E-WORD* reveals the answer:

It's happening because as a nation—as an entire species—we've neglected to understand the human ego and what makes it tick.

When top network TV editor Cate Montana woke up to the fact that her successful career-driven existence delivered zero happiness and fulfillment, she set off on a quest to find out why. One advanced degree in psychology and 20,000+ hours of meditation later, this is what she discovered:

THE EGO IS NOT WHO WE ARE. IT'S A MENTAL PROGRAM, LIKE A COMPUTER CODE, ENABLING US TO FUNCTION IN THE WORLD—A SENSORY CODE GIVING US THE ILLUSION OF INDIVIDUALITY—AN UTTERLY FALSE "REALITY" SIMILAR TO WHAT'S PRESENTED IN THE MOVIE *THE MATRIX*.

The root code running Donald Trump (and everybody else around the globe) is the unconscious belief in separation from life and others; a belief that fosters insecurity, competition, disunity, disdain, judgment, war, walls, weapons and exploitation.

The age-old struggle between love (exemplified by the open mind/open hand) and the fear-driven ego (the closed-mind/closed fist) can never be resolved until we understand who we really are.

Through stories, practices, and a masterful detangling of consciousness, psychology and quantum physics, **THE E-WORD (Enliven; \$24; January 17, 2017)** exposes the dysfunctional nature of the ego and shows how it can be evolved and expanded—not inflated—into a more authentic level of functioning called transpersonal consciousness where human beings are liberated from the misperceptions of separation from life, the world, and each other that lie at the foundation of all human suffering and conflict.

The book also strips away ego-perpetuated illusions about religion, spirituality and enlightenment, gently (but thoroughly) exposing how self-improvement techniques and spiritual seeking can end up chasing away the very fulfillment, wisdom and happiness people seek. A riveting combination of Eckhart Tolle and Anne Lamott, **THE E-WORD** is a Red Pill wake-up call for those seeking a common-sense understanding of human nature and why we're facing the extreme schisms and critical issues we are today.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author of *Unearthing Venus: My Search for the Woman Within* and co-author of *The Heart of the Matter* with Dr. Darren Weissman, Cate Montana has a master's degree in humanistic psychology and writes and teaches about the ego, transpersonal and transcendent consciousness, quantum physics and evolution. A journalist for almost 30 years, she served as the NW Bureau Chief and editor for the national Native American paper *Indian Country Today* and has written for *Seattle Magazine* and numerous other Northwest publications.

While editor of *The Bleeping Herald* newsletter for the hit indie film *What the Bleep Do We Know!*, she interviewed physicists, biochemists, and consciousness researchers writing about and demystifying quantum mechanics and consciousness for lay audiences

Currently she writes for *Psychology Today*, the UK publication *What Doctors Don't Tell You* and blogs for *The Huffington Post*. She lives in the Pacific Northwest.



THE E-WORD by Cate Montana

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ADVANCE PRAISE FOR THE E-WORD

“Cate Montana's book *The E Word* says it all. I have learned, as she has, that the quiet mind is the essence of it all. The practical, mystical and spiritual truths can all be known to us. Let Cate's book guide you through the unknown to the truth.”

– **Dr. Bernie Siegel, author of *Love, Medicine & Miracles***

“With wit and eloquence, Cate Montana exposes the ego's masquerading effort to convince us we are made in its image and likeness. With equal skill she holds before us the essence of our true nature—creative, free, and whole.”

– **Michael Bernard Beckwith, author of *Spiritual Liberation***

“That which used to call itself Cate Montana dissolved into nothingness. Then she returned to tell the tale in *The E Word*. Delightful, compelling, and profound.”

– **Dean Radin Ph.D., Chief Scientist, Institute of Noetic Sciences and author of *The Conscious Universe, Entangled Minds, and Supernormal***

“Cate Montana has accomplished something quite rare: she makes the depths of consciousness, existence and enlightenment readily accessible, without cheapening the profound pay-off that comes with living there.”

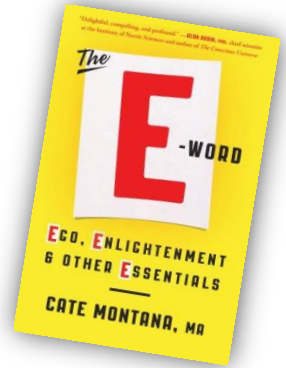
– **Chris Aanstoos, Ph.D. Professor of Psychology, University of West Georgia**

“A clever, inspiring handbook for navigating the ego, *The E-Word* is packed with useful meditations, practices, and exercises designed to give the reader a real experience of their own. The truths Cate shares are truly illuminating.” — **Katy Koontz, editor, *Unity Magazine***

“An extraordinary journey of awakening, Cate Montana's insights into the ego, reflections on enlightenment and delightful humor make this a joy to read, and then read again.”

–**William Arntz, creator of *What the BLEEP Do We Know!?***

“Cate Montana is a fierce seeker of the truth. Her dedication to her meditation practice is profound. She shares her journey and offers practical tools for the reader throughout this humorous, compassionate, and wise gem of a book.” —**Diana Winston, Director of Mindfulness Education at UCLA and author of *Fully Present: The Science, Art, and Practice of Mindfulness***



MEDIA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1) You make the controversial statement that Donald Trump is a perfect example of a less-evolved ego. Could you explain that?

Some modern schools of psychology hold that ego consciousness—our self-awareness—evolves over time both individually and collectively. Dr. Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of transpersonal psychology and the Fourth Wave of Psychology, whose thinking dovetails with my own, believed that humans evolve through five levels of desire-driven ego function.

Basically the two lowest levels of personal ego are characterized by complete absorption in securing physical needs and gaining control over those needs. After the basics of consistent food, water, shelter, sex and economic security are provided, the ego develops higher interests such as the need to “belong” to a family and community. Once belonging needs are satisfied, a fourth level of needs arises: the need for self-esteem.

Most of Western civilization is currently operating at the fourth level of Maslow’s Needs Hierarchy, Donald Trump among them. At this level the ego seeks approval from others through attaining wealth, material goods, power and fame.

Self-actualization is the fifth level where the ego’s need is to live autonomously and creatively, with no need of outside approval from others—including the need to “look good” in terms of material success.

At the sixth and highest level the ego expands beyond narrow self-identification and begins to perceive others and life itself as part of the “self.” This is the realm where loves takes over and sister/brotherhood reigns supreme.

The sixth level is called the transpersonal level of ego function and currently millions of people are at this level, involved in environmental and social groups, NGOs and sustainable businesses, alternative health and sustainable agriculture. The Internet itself is an external reflection of this evolution in consciousness towards interconnectivity, peaceful coexistence, and the recognition of the essential unification of all life.

The progressive political movement—best represented by Bernie Sanders—is most in alignment with the sixth level of transpersonal ego consciousness.

Donald Trump is stuck back at the fourth level seeking to bolster his ego’s need for self-esteem. He is also deeply mired in base level sex needs and the need for control. (The ego can operate across several levels of consciousness at the same time.)

2) How does your “ego analysis” explain corporate greed and political corruption?

The foundation of the ego is the unconscious sense-based assumption that “I” am separate from everything and everybody else in the world. My senses give me the common-sense “truth” of this condition every waking second of my life. And yet quantum physics shows that we live in a world without boundaries and borders—that every “thing” in creation is comprised of energy/information and connected to every other “thing” in existence.

Jesus explained this scientific fact by saying such things as, “My Father and I are one.” Mystics and shamans have been pointing out the essential unity of all life for thousands of years. *But the untrained, unmanaged, un-evolved ego can't see the deeper truth of its condition.* Thus its primary mandate is to protect and serve its isolated “self.”

“Survival at all costs” is the ego’s primary motto. And because it feels isolated it is deeply insecure. Thus it chronically seeks to “look good” and prove itself better by having control over other people and resources. The second motto of the unaware ego is, “He who dies with the most toys wins.” Hence corporate greed and political corruption.

3) Fundamentalism – Islamic, Judaic, and Christian – is making a global comeback and Christian fundamentalism is making strong gains in American politics. Hard-won women’s rights are slipping away. How do you explain this? And how would a new understanding of the ego change this?

When the ego views the world through the lens of separation rather than unification, it dwells in a chronic state of suspicion and fear. Maintaining control over the environment is paramount. And part of maintaining order and control is through the establishment of inflexible rules and beliefs about “how life is.” The unaware ego is terrified of not having all the answers all the time. It’s also frightened by a lack of structure.

In addition, when everything and everybody are perceived as “other,” there is a constant unconscious need to control that “other” in order to remain safe. Frankly, in this world there is no more basic expression of “otherness” than male and female. Men are from Mars, women are from Venus and all that.

Taken together ... the need for control, the need for absolute answers about the nature of existence before we had the scientific capacity to gather accurate answers, the need for structure, the need to control the “other” ... what do we have? Religion.

All the world’s primary religions were established by men back when the guys were in charge and hardly anybody could read. Which is not to lay blame or point any fingers. It’s just a fact. We have evolved since then (despite fundamentalist arguments to the contrary). We have more information and bandwidth than we did 2,500 years ago. The All Powerful Authoritarian Male, symbolized by the Angry Father in Heaven Above, has had its day in the sun. In a time of nuclear devices, bioterrorism, and ecological disaster we can no longer afford to be ruled by fear and ignorance as to the nature of reality and the nature of our selves.

And yet thousands of years of traditional thinking are difficult to set aside. Fundamentalist beliefs rooted in separation and fear will not go quietly into the night. Not every human being on this planet is at the same place in evolution. Not every ego is ready to lay down its defenses and move on. And yet moving on into an evolved understanding about life and the nature of the ego is the antidote to all the ego’s self-created problems.

4) The climate is changing faster than the news can report. Oceans are dying while the fight over fossil fuel exploitation escalates. How is it possible for people to ignore these things?

The separated ego does it easily. Again, it all comes down to control. The fear-based ego has to keep its worldview intact at all costs or it risks falling apart—or so it unconsciously fears. Denial, obfuscation, outright lies, a loud voice, a pounding fist, a closed mind ... these are the separated ego's defenses against anything that doesn't match its position. And it feels incredibly self-righteous implementing these defenses.

5) You say all of humanity's problems flow from our lack of self-understanding. Could you explain that?

If our underlying perceptions about ourselves and the nature of the world are false, it stands to reason that everything that flows from those invalid assessments will also be false and thus prove highly problematic.

Looking at it from the practical point of view, let's say someone makes the statement, "I just want to be happy."

Great. Everybody wants that. And yet what is the likelihood of somebody being happy when they don't actually know who or what "I" even is?

We don't live in a particularly happy world. This is the reason.

6) What is the ego?

The ego is a mental program and the vehicle of identity we use to operate in the world. We couldn't function in a healthy way without it. Problems only arise when we're ignorant of the nature and purpose of the ego and unaware of the fact that inaccurate sensory perceptions we experience through the human body end up programming us to think and act in certain highly limited and destructive ways.

7) Do you think the ego is the enemy?

We would not be able to function in the world (or the dream of this world to be more exact) without a coherent sense of self. The ego is a vehicle for consciousness. It is a tool that enables us to interact and have the human experience. It can be evolved to become a vehicle for an ever-expanding consciousness with tremendous potential.

8) What human perceptions are inaccurate and problematic?

If we perceive the world as some "thing" outside of us; if we perceive other people as outside of us and disconnected from us; if we perceive ourselves as purely physical and mortal ... what can we expect but a world filled with insecure, self-protective, competitive, materialistic egos and nuclear-arms hoarding, wall-building, resource-raping cultures that reflect these perceptions?

9) The world and other people are outside of us. We are physical beings. How can you say otherwise?

The world and other people are not outside of us. We are not physical beings. Yes, this is absolutely how things *appear* and *seem*. But it's not the truth.

10) How do you know this?

Years spent in deep contemplation and some 20,000 hours of meditation taught me to see behind the veil of illusion that the world draws over our eyes. All the great mystics have advised people to "look within" for truth because it can't be found in the world. And they're right.

Quantum physicists have stumbled upon proof that the world is not physical—that it's comprised of interconnecting waves of energy/information. They've also proven that "reality" is actually holographic and that everything is connected. Some of the most advanced theories explain reality as consciousness itself. I concur with this view.

11) What do you mean "consciousness is reality?"

David Chalmers, Professor of Philosophy and co-director of the Center for Mind, Brain, and Consciousness at NYU holds that consciousness is a fundamental characteristic of existence like space and time. Computer engineer and Artificial Intelligence expert Bernardo Kastrup, Ph.D. takes it one step further, declaring that consciousness basically *is* space/time itself.

English mathematical physicist and philosopher Sir Roger Penrose has theorized that consciousness is information much like the realm of Ideals Plato theorized back in 380 BC. My own insights have lead me to the same understanding: The "world" is an abstract collection of ideas serving as a playground for the evolution of equally abstract "beings" called humans.

In other words, the world—the multiverse—is basically one gigantic thought. Not a thought in human terms, meaning a word-based stream of concepts like "The sky is blue" or "What will I eat for lunch?" Rather the world is a locus of intelligence—abstract information—from which experience (more intelligence) can be derived.

12) What good does it do us knowing about the ego and quantum physics and the true nature of reality?

What good does it do us seeing ourselves purely as separate, isolated, stand-alone units made of flesh?

If we accept the common-sense premise that, "As you think, so your life shall be," and we think that separation and physicality are the root core of life, it stands to reason we'll end up with a deeply lonely, insecure, materialistically-obsessed society. And lo and behold, this is exactly what we have.

If we take the time to study what science and mysticism tell us and look beyond the obvious and come to realize that connection and consciousness are the root core of life, it stands to reason we'll end up with a deeply cooperative, secure, highly confident and contemplative society. Not hard to see which might be preferable.

13) What do you recommend people do to get a handle on the ego?

The E Word is a great place for people to start. I deliberately wrote the book as a primer, making the concepts as available as possible for people. Aside from that I recommend several things: 1) start meditating; 2) turn within and ask yourself the question, "Who am I?" ... and don't take your name, gender, sexual preference, career choice or ethnic persuasion as the answer; 3) study quantum physics and if you're so inclined, mysticism. Find out what science has to say about the nature of reality and the world we apparently live in and then 4) THINK about it.

14) Who has time to meditate in today's world?

If self-knowledge really is the cure for everything from chronic unhappiness to global warming, the question is, "Who *doesn't* have time?"

I'm not asking people to go sit in a cave. I do suggest they take an hour a day to contemplate the nature of the self and what science has discovered and what all the world's great mystics have stated about the nature of reality and learn for themselves what is real.

We get what we ask for in life. If I want meaning and fulfillment ... if I desire love and peace ... if I hunger for connection and harmony and dream of a better world where all beings and nature are treated with kindness and respect, then it behooves me to figure out what the hell is standing in the way of that kind of life and get on with taking the time to create it.

15) You take a pretty tough stance on religion and spirituality. Why is that?

I'm not against religion and spirituality. I'm against peddling untrue stories and ignorance as "reality."

When we don't know who we really are and have no grasp on the nature of reality, untrue stories and ignorance are all we can expect. We have no basis for discernment and will buy into any ridiculous opinion/belief system presented powerfully enough and consistently enough because it matches our social programming and insecurity issues.

For example, for two thousand years we've bought into the Christian story about the fundamental "sinfulness" of man.

And yet over the course of my life I've been consistently blown away by how great most people are. I've been fortunate to travel a lot around the US and different countries, including many third-world nations. Everywhere I go I find nothing but basically decent human beings who want to live secure, satisfying lives and have a safe, sane world for their kids to grow up in.

Evil and deadly sin are not commonplace. That's propaganda created to guarantee church attendance and money in the coffers. And the whole sensationalistic "If it bleeds it leads" mentality of the media guarantees people see a horrifically skewed view of the world and human nature.

Frankly the whole "sin" thing really pisses me off. It's been the most damaging story perpetrated upon humanity in all of history.

16) How can belief in sin be damaging?

Geneticists have discovered that powerful emotions affect our genes, triggering modifications in our DNA, setting up the genetic conditions for similar emotions to be experienced in offspring.

Over 2000 years being told, “You’re a sinful piece of crap” has inspired tremendous guilt and self-hatred in generation after generation of women and men. Personally, given what I’ve read about epigenetics (how gene expression is modified by an organism) I think religious emphasis on sin is responsible for the epidemic of low self-esteem issues, depression and addiction plaguing humanity today.

17) You say that a lot of spiritual practices and self-esteem building techniques actually take us *away* from happiness and greater self-esteem. Can you talk about this?

Personal identity is an idea about ourselves that results from sensory data and social programming. It’s not really who we are and actually not even really real. And this “unreal self” is what we keep trying to massage and improve. Is it any wonder we have a hard time building self-esteem? We don’t even know what the self really is.

Self-esteem practices and most spiritual practices start from the false premise that the individual self is real and that improving this unreal self will bring happiness, abundance and good fortune. That’s impossible. What brings happiness, abundance and good fortune is knowing what’s real and living from that space.

18) Do you believe humanity is at a tipping point?

I do. A lot of times in life we experience a defining moment. Depending on our choices in that moment, from that point on everything changes for good or for ill. That’s where our species is now.

In a world of nuclear warheads and rapidly shrinking global resources, we can no longer afford to live as frightened unaware egos believing that “He Who Dies With the Most Toys Wins” is a viable social philosophy.

It’s paramount for human wellbeing and sheer survival that we understand what the ego is, what fosters its crippling insecurities and insane agendas, and finally learn how to manage it.

It’s time to grow up. And the blessing of growing up in consciousness is that life gets ever so much happier, satisfying and fun when we do!!